DEVELOPMENT FORUM

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Africans brace for new wave of famine

Emergencies linked to civil wars

Slowly but inexorably, world attention—diverted in recent months by pictures of empty supermarket shelves in the Soviet Union and the threat of war in the Persian Gulf—is refocusing on the chronic and ex-

by Baffour Ankomah

tensive food shortages threatening the lives of some 10 million people in Africa.

The almost perfunctory initial reports about drought and famine in Angola, Mozambique, Sudan, Ethiopia and Liberia have developed into a flood of alarming reports about the extent of the shortages. Appeals for speedy assistance by international aid workers are being echoed at government levels.

Recent reports by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have brought home the enormity of the food situation in Sudan and Ethiopia, putting beyond doubt the prospect of severe famine and widespread loss of life in both countries this year unless action is taken by the international community.

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***Learning to live with garbage**: Recycling has become a priority, especially in our cities. Read how industrialized and developing countries alike are digging out from under mountains of reusable trash. pp. 12-13*

Focus on people and security precondition for development

Developing countries have no shortage of advice on how to implement their development plans. Making them succeed, however, has often proven elusive. Development expert Mahbub ul Haq, stressing the political element in the development formula, argues that the international community, the UN in particular, and national governments must respond to broader preconditions for development if real progress is to be made during the 1990s.

by Mahbub ul Haq

As we in the United Nations struggle to devise a viable action plan for development in the 1990s, I would like to suggest some strategic guidelines to implement global cooperation with developing nations.

First, let us accept human development as the framework for all our efforts in the 1990s, putting people at the centre of all development. What does this mean concretely? It means that we should persuade all developing countries to prepare their own human development strategies for the next 10 years, with emphasis on the integration of their social aspirations and human goals, in effect, building a bridge between required economic growth and high levels of human progress.

To accomplish this, we should take all the targets, whether they emerge from the international conference at Jomtien on education for all, from the world summit for children, or from the various national applications of global targeting exercises, and bring them down to the national level, with each country preparing its own perspective for the next 10 years with the help of the United Nations system.

Around that, we need a concrete strategy for implementation at the country level: How this perspective is to be built into project designs, and policy formulation, and evaluation and monitoring systems, etc.

I hope that we will undertake, concretely, the work of helping the developing countries formulate their human development strategies for the 1990s. This formulation needs to be done not only in the developing countries, but also in the rich nations, which also must plan how the potential peace dividend can be turned to the neglected social agenda, from drugs to homelessness. Because unless the rich nations look after their own poor, their own neglected, their own social agenda, it is too much to expect that they will look after the neglected agenda in the developing countries.

Second, let us create a political framework for a sizeable peace dividend. In the Third World this means stopping the 7.5 per cent increase per annum in military expenditures that has taken place over the

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Trade talks suspended

Will GATT bring free trade or fair trade?

The four-year effort to rewrite the rules for world trade stalled in December when negotiations between the United States and the 12 nations of the European community (EC) broke down over the issue of greatest importance to the industrialized nations: farm subsidies.

by Paul Heath Hoeffel

While many observers predicted the talks in Brussels would break down on this prickly issue, the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) cannot yet be termed a failure. They are scheduled to continue in February in Geneva and, barring a resurgence of economic nationalism, a new world trade agreement is still expected to emerge. Failure could set off a disruptive wave of trade wars.

In fact, some developing country delegations are relieved that the Uruguay Round is being extended as this gives them more time to improve the terms of the pending agreements. Members of the G77 have repeatedly expressed their concern that the agreements should be more favourable to the vulnerable economies of the developing nations. Many believe that the new rules of the game will favour the industrialized nations of the North, arguing that for those countries with weaker economies, free trade is not necessarily fair trade.

The GATT talks are an attempt to liberalize world trade on an unprecedented scale, aiming at lowering trade barriers on nearly $4 trillion worth of global trade in virtually all trading areas. The results of the Uruguay Round will be so far-reaching that they will basically set the rules governing trade relations into the 21st century.

Virtually all countries agree that the earlier GATT agreements need to be updated and that, in general, freer trade is preferable to protectionism. High tariffs have hurt North-South trade to the disadvantage of developing countries.

The final agreement will cover everything

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letters

Troubled by Asian miracles

Dear Editor—The November-December article by Walden Bello and Stephanie Rosenfeld on "Asia's Troubled Miracles" helps draw lessons from the developmental experience of the East Asian NICs. The focus is properly placed on the unravelling of the economic and socio-political conditions for Korea's and Taiwan's rapid export-oriented growth process. I do, however, have a few comments about their analysis.

First, the analysis of the NIC "developmental model" seems overly focused on external conditions. Close relations with the United States and Japan were of course crucial, but other countries in Asia—such as the Philippines— had such connections, yet showed less favourable results in terms of either growth rates or social equity.

References to "command capitalism" as the key internal driver of the NIC model does capture the state's central economic role, but may mask other key dynamics. Indeed, the debate about the state's development role often seems mired on the axis of whether the state should be "more" or "less" involved in the development process. It would be more helpful to analyze what the state is doing, and how it is doing it and the relationship between the state, the private sector and the global market.

The article's discussion of the "structural squeeze" of the NICs—which are supposedly caught between the advanced industrialized economies and less developed countries—may be based on the questionable premise that the manufacturing strength of the NICs is based only on "cheap labour". Since the late 1970s, neither Taiwan nor Korea have been the sites for "cheapest" labour costs. Both remained popular manufacturing sites because of the combination of factors including fairly low wages, highly skilled labour, high productivity and good infrastructure.

Bello and Rosenfeld do not give adequate consideration to the possibility that Taiwan and Korea can continue to maintain high trading levels. The NIC's dependence on the United States market has declined rapidly in the late 1980s. Efforts to diversify markets to South-East Asia, Europe, China, and, most recently, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are showing some success.

There is no evidence offered in the article to support the implication that "making the economy wide open to foreign investment or manufactured imports from the advanced industrialized countries" is not a "wise policy". My own interviews on Taiwan and available studies indicate not only that transnational corporations generally offer better labour conditions than local firms, but that foreign companies are more responsive to changes and ecological improvements.

Aspects of long-standing authoritarian rule facilitated export-oriented industrialization in the 1960s-1970s. But the argument can be made that the rapid socio-economic development also spawned the consumer, environmental, labour and democratic movements of the late 1970s-1980s. These movements, plus factors such as increasing access to international information flows have surely contributed to the erosion of that authoritarianism.

For both Korea and Taiwan, the main problem areas may lie less in reducing reliance on trade than in revamping archaic financial and political systems. Failure to respond to demands from a dynamic, highly educated populace for greater political participation could indeed lead to an extended period of social and political strife that could inhibit further progress.

Dennis Engbarth, Asia Editor, Business International, *New York City.*

International Criminal Court

Dear Editor—Your article "Crime congress looks to 21st century" in the November-December issue of *DF* failed to mention long-standing efforts to establish an International Criminal Court. Considering the increase in transnational crime and the awareness demonstrated by the 81 speakers at the Congress in Cuba who spoke of the need of "international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice", the subject of the International Criminal Court at least deserves specific mention.

While national courts are capable of dealing with alien offenders of national laws, there is also need for an international probation system to assist in providing the national courts with international pre-sentence investigation reports and international pre-release investigation reports of those aliens who, having served sentences in the nations of jurisdiction, are to be deported upon achieving probation or parole.

An International Criminal Court with jurisdiction over transnational crimes is essential to hear such cases and impose appropriate sentences. An international probation system would serve its needs for similar pre-sentence and pre-release investigations and to maintain liaison with correctional institutions as well as providing other services as requested.

There are those who feel that there would be too great opposition from nations fearful of giving up some measure of sovereignty if they agreed to the establishment of such a court. One may point to the precedent of the International Court convened to hear cases of war crimes following World War II.

Rather than depriving a nation of sovereignty, such a court composed of judges representative of various nations, and with power of issuance of international warrants, would assure such nations that their rights would be recognized and transnational violators of their criminal statutes would be brought to justice.

There is increasing need that publications such as *Development Forum* bring attention to the need for these institutions if the call for international cooperation in criminal investigation and law enforcement is to be realized.

Frederick Greenwald, Ph.D., Executive Director, Foundation for the Development of International Probation and Parole Practice, 570 Landreville "1A", Nuns Island, Verdun, Quebec, Canada H3E 1B4.

Worried by nuclear safety

Dear Editor—I found the article on decommissioning nuclear facilities in the November-December issue disturbing in its implications—that so many plants are now growing old and somehow must be dismantled and safely disposed of.

In light of previous assurances by the nuclear power industry (and its regulating bodies, like IAEA) that all will be done safely—and the many examples of the failure to do so in all phases of the development and operation of the nuclear energy business—I am especially concerned about this last phase, where we are very much in the experimental stage.

If that were not enough to worry about, I noted in the October-November 1990 *IAEA Newsletter* that there was a recent meeting of "nuclear power experts" in which the topic of discussion was how to extend the life of plants—perhaps up to 60 years—through careful monitoring and preventive maintenance programmes "which mitigate the effects of ageing, while at the same time controlling the costs of production".

For those of us who worry about young plants, as I do, the thought of patching up the old ones to keep them running longer is scary indeed!

Barry Childers, Ph.D., 10, Ave des Amazones, 1224 Chene-Bougeries, Geneva, Switzerland.

Plumbing problems

Dear Editor—I would like to praise the work of *Development Forum* in general and the four water-related articles in the November-December issue in particular. The excellent article "Creating water markets: solution or threat for farmers?" by John Colmey, which briefly outlines the problems of water-selling in India, implied that the water problems were created by commercialization of this resource. However, my experience as a hydrologist in the region tells me that the blame for the fivefold increase in extractions in Gujarat after liberal loans for tubewells may possibly have had little to do with the selling of water by the owners of the tubewells, but simply have been due to the stepped up demand for water by farmers that is occurring in any case.

I was also concerned about the article "Water beneath its sea of sand?" on water in Egypt by Deborah Pugh. Many of the points are quite reasonable, but leave the impression that Mr. Al-Baz is an expert on the subject of Egyptian water. I have seen several other articles on Egypt by other journalists who have interviewed Mr. Al-Baz while he was still with the Smithsonian Institution, in which he offers opinions as an expert on a variety of other subjects. There is a great amount of expert information available on Egypt's western desert, much of it due to extensive (and expensive) studies financed by UNDP. Now I read a statement which, if obtained from him, is highly questionable. It would appear that a well has been drilled which yields perhaps 80 cubic metres per second. This amount of water, if from a flowing well, would soon form a river. If it is pumped, the well would have to be very large in diametre to handle a pump that size. This seems to me to be very unlikely. I would be interested in a follow-up story on this subject.

Keep up the good work.

Robert G. Thomas, 6 The Esplanade, Plymouth PL1 2PJ, UK.

We read you

Dear Editor—Many thanks to you for your work in *Development Forum*. I can say that many teachers and students currently read our copy of the paper and some have tried to do the practical steps suggested in the articles like conservation of the environment and population issues.

Alemayehu Amana, P.O. Box 74, Mettu, Illubabor, Ethiopia.

DEVELOPMENT FORUM

"Development Forum has a key role to play in the creation of such an informed public opinion, which sees the future in terms of humankind as a whole. It offers to its readers varied and stimulating opinions on matters of vital concern. As its name implies, its columns are open to all those who have a creative contribution to make towards greater understanding, be they from governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, the media, the academic community, or private individuals."

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, UN Secretary-General

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Opinion

Making foreign aid work

by Barry Herman

Many people who are involved with development issues have read a recent book called *Lords of Poverty* (Macmillan London Ltd., and Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 1989), by Graham Hancock, a former East Africa correspondent for *The Economist*. It is easy to see why. The book is an impassioned plea to the people of the industrialized world to close down the whole development assistance enterprise.

In Hancock's view, the poor of the developing world would be better off if the IMF, the World Bank, the United Nations, the donor agencies of the governments of the developed countries and some of the private voluntary agencies from the North simply closed up shop and went away.

He is partly right. He certainly cites enough examples of ineffective or counterproductive assistance, some of them well known in the field. However, the idea of development cooperation has been so compelling—that governments of industrialized countries could speed up the economic transformation of the developing countries—that parliaments have funded official development assistance for over 40 years. And surely aid is sometimes effective and can be made more effective in more situations.

Maybe Hancock is too angry to be a reformer. One does have to steel oneself against the cant in the international development dialogue and the politics in actual aid policy. Hanging around government legislative committees when foreign aid bills are debated, one would hear how aid supports strategic foreign policy goals, promotes donor country exports and investor interests, reduces agricultural surpluses, and so on. Aid based on need often seems to be a low priority. Aid lobbyists from church and civic groups fight the good fight against hunger and poverty, but in most countries they are not the people who make development assistance policy.

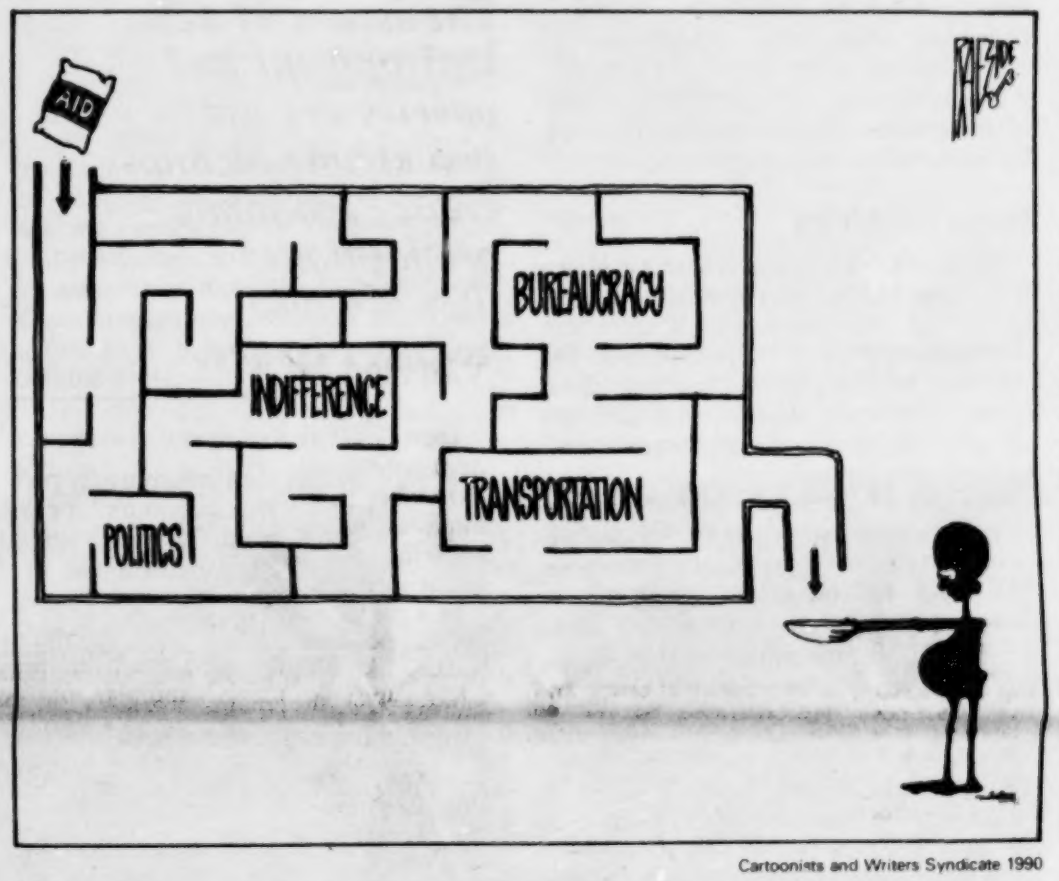
Most of Hancock's complaints—about high salaries for managers and technocrats, excessively comfortable staff working conditions, bureaucratic squabbles, dysfunctional political agendas of donor or recipients, built-in preferences for big projects, and so on—can be applied more or less to the operations of most large organizations, especially governmental ones.

However, he also points again and again to the hubris of development assistance and the isolation of aid staff from the lives of the poor, their intended clients. The same charge is easily leveled against governments of some aid-recipient countries, since the aid agencies work in tandem with them.

That isolation and hubris, the arrogance that development can be guided from abroad, I believe, are the crux of the failures of aid. But in aid policy as in national development policy, the answer to failed top-down economic and social engineering need not be abandoning all idea of activist official policy. The answer could be greater participation of clients in the decision-making process or, more strongly, responsibility of clients for the decisions.

The aid-recipient government that accepts this approach must be willing to take risks. Clients are mobilized to help design and operate projects. Success in such experiences naturally leads people to demand more control over their lives, more opportunities to be entrepreneurial. A more assertive population may bolster the government, but it also might not continue to support it.

The answer to failed top-down economic and social engineering could be greater participation of clients in the decision-making process.



Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate 1990

Anti-poverty approach

The underlying presumption in donors providing foreign aid to such projects is that aid should be aimed at assisting the poor in developing countries to do what they could not do by themselves or with the inadequate financial and technical resources that their own governments could mobilize domestically on their behalf.

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Looking beyond the doable

by Claudio Schuftan

"The 90s" are one of those arbitrary time-locks we in development work like to use to make new resolutions to tackle, once and for all, the problems of underdevelopment in the world. But there is nothing magical about a new decade. In development work, milestone breakthroughs rarely happen, and much less do they occur on nicely rounded dates. I would argue that no progress will be made in the decade to come unless we make some major changes in development thinking and development work.

While there is, understandably, a temptation to look at the hopeful side of the new decade, the reality is likely to be harsh. Lowered East-West tensions will mostly mean shifts favouring Eastern Europe, not the Third World. Peace dividends resulting from disarmament talks in the North will not spread to regional or national conflicts that contribute to the planet's worst underdevelopment problems.

Furthermore, present global economic and political realignments are not of the kind needed to favour unequivocally the world's poor and hungry. The search for consensus on global environmental reforms is overshadowing the search for solutions to our most pressing equity concerns related to needed socio-political changes.

Take the battle against hunger as an example. One cannot but be amazed that experts are now saying that the 90s offer a breakthrough, because "we have now discovered the real causes of hunger". Where have we been all these years, then, that it has taken us until now to discover these causes which have been around us since time immemorial? The hungry could have told us long ago what the problems were.

One wonders, then, what can we development workers, especially those in the jet-set category, be accused of when confronted with all these years of "stagno-deterioration"? Not necessarily of a lack of commitment, nor mediocrity; I hope not of cynicism, although I am not always sure; not of profiteering or lack of professionalism.

But I think we can stand accused for the staleness of our approaches; for our complacency towards the status quo; for our lack of criticism of the overall lack of progress; for our political naïveté or—more likely—for our choice not to get involved in the politics of it all; for uncritically pushing forward to do something and get things done and over with; for not solving problems boldly using workable approaches agreed upon with those who must live with our decisions; for our paternalistic and ethnocentric approach. In sum, we cannot escape taking part of the blame.

A minimalist approach dominates our development philosophy, resulting from our obsession to sharpen the focus of the interventions through which we choose to tackle development issues. Many of these interventions, especially by the United Nations, mainly contribute to better chronicling and record-keeping of how bad the situation is.

These minimalist strategies—still dominant in 1991—concentrate on doing the "doable" and thus apply a "shish-kebab mentality" as one prominent United Nations official has called it. This approach looks at the various problems of maldevelopment as if they were all separate events skewed together by tragedy. But the skewer is not tragedy! The skewer represents the sum of the structural constraints that perpetuate the poverty and powerlessness cycle with all the ill health, malnutrition and other problems that come with it.

A minimalist approach dominates our development philosophy, resulting from our obsession to sharpen the focus of the interventions through which we choose to tackle development issues.

The fallacy is to keep concentrating on the pieces of meat in the shish-kebab as the only "doable" alternative; the tackling of the structural problems in the skewer is also "doable". But only to the extent that we—together with the victims of non-development—concentrate our efforts and energies on doing so, since these problems will not go away by themselves. Therein lies the real challenge for the 90s.

The question of how we can more effectively work together to heighten the priority for an all-out battle against underdevelopment cannot be posed in isolation anymore. We must ask if we are willing to drop much of what we are currently doing as development professionals and institutions and more decisively move, with the beneficiaries, into new directions with a greater potential to make a dent on the chronic and self-perpetuating problems of maldevelopment.

Looking the other way, or conducting business as usual to deliver more of the same during the decade of the 90s, even if "more focused" (as the present mood seems to call for), will not do. We cannot forget that the next time-lock marks a millennium in our civilization, a civilization that has for so long pursued the wrong development priorities. □

Claudio Schuftan, a Chilean medical doctor in Nairobi, is senior advisor with the Kenyan Ministry of Health.

Focus on people and security

from page 1

last 30 years. This has led now to a situation in which there are eight times more soldiers than physicians in the developing world, and many of the poorest countries are spending three times as much on military as on social expenditures. We must reverse this trend. I would suggest seriously considering freezing military expenditures in the developing world. Because if we succeed in that, the potential dividend is $10 billion in 1990, growing cumulatively to $180 billion by the year 2000.

Liquidating the consequences of the cold war in the Third World means phasing out foreign military bases and military assistance, and putting the brakes on sophisticated military shipments.

I hope in this that we take the perspective offered by former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias, that new structures of peace and security be created in the Third World, led by their own regional organizations, strengthened greatly by the United Nations, benevolently encouraged by the superpowers.

Liquidating the consequences of the cold war in the Third World means phasing out foreign military bases, military assistance, and putting the brakes on sophisticated military shipments. I also hope there is external pressure, besides internal dialogue in these countries, where a military-social balance becomes a legitimate part of the policy dialogue of donors with recipient countries.

So far as the developed countries are concerned, I am one of those who does not agree that events in the Persian Gulf may compromise or take away the peace dividend in the developed world. Let us not forget, first, that there has been a decrease of 2 to 4 per cent per annum in the military expenditures of the nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the last two years. What is now being agreed on disarmament has implicit in it another 2 to 3 per cent per annum reduction in military expenditures over the next 10 years in the United States, the USSR, Eastern Europe and the OECD nations.

So let us try, at least, to create lobbies for change in the 1990s, and for a sizeable peace dividend both in the Third World and in the developed countries.

The third action point is to fashion new concepts of sustainable development which make environment a unifying rather than divisive issue between the North and the South. And what will that take? It will mean that a global attack on the worst consequences of environmental deterioration cannot be divorced from an attack on global poverty. Because if global environment and global poverty are delinked, there will be a big problem in the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

It also means that the priorities of developing countries on environment should be respected. These priorities are more about water pollution and land degradation when compared with the rising concern about air pollution and global warming in the industrial world.

It also means that additional resources have to be there to look after these issues. The bulk of these resources will have to come from the rich nations, who are responsible for the major part of international pollution, and who have the resources from past development to look after the future cleanup of the globe. If we do this, it is possible to bring together the concerns of the North and South on the environmental issue in the 1992 conference.

Focus on Africa

The fourth action point is to move Africa to the centre of the international spotlight. This is where absolute poverty is, and where it is likely to grow in the next decade. We need now to do something concrete about Africa in this next decade, so it does not become a marginalized backwater of international development.

How can it be done? By preparing long-term development strategies for Africa, based on investment in people, on food self-sufficiency and on action management. These are strategies that come from within, because unfortunately, Africa has probably received more bad advice per capita than any other continent in the last 30 years.

It also means that the bulk of international concessional resources — low and no interest loans — should be concentrated in Africa in the next decade. Over the past 30 years, South Asia—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia—have received over 80 per cent of IDA resources, helping them to begin their transformations. These nations are winning the battle of population increase versus food increase. In some cases, they are not only self-sufficient, but exporters of food. The remarkable transformation needed in Africa will take similar concentration of the world's concessional resources.

A global attack on the worst consequences of environmental deterioration cannot be divorced from an attack on global poverty.

But let us think afresh about Africa, both in terms of long-term strategies and for the concentration of concessional resources there and for restructuring of technical cooperation of $6 billion per year, $10 per capita, which unfortunately in the last 30 years has been consistent with fairly low levels of human development in the region. We must find ways to use technical assistance to build investment in people within Africa, and not rely so heavily on foreign experts and consultants.

New global cooperation

Fifth, let us design a new structure of global cooperation, and design it around people. We normally take issues like resource transfer, trade, investment flows, commodity prices, as isolated issues. They are all linked together in terms of what economic opportunities are generated and how they are distributed among the people of the world. It is that analysis we should carry out of the global system, how it is generating and distributing economic opportunities—and how this needs to be changed. If these opportunities do not travel towards the people, then unfortunately people will travel towards economic opportunities. As John Kenneth Galbraith warned as far back as 1960, we might see unprecedented movements of people around the globe during the 1990s. I think it is in that context that we have to see what economic opportunities are being generated and how they are being distributed. And whether it is trade, aid or commodity prices, they should be analyzed in that framework and should be changed in that framework.

The issues of debt, environment and poverty are not just simple technocratic, economic propositions; they are also political issues.

Finally, let us think of the restructuring of the United Nations, so it can assume development leadership as well as political leadership. I have two concrete suggestions there.

The focus on human development is a concern of the United Nations because virtually all of its collective work deals with various aspects of social development. With strong leadership the United Nations system can have a certain unique development profile and role in the 1990s, highlighting the development impact of project designs on people and reconstructing the whole development design endeavour.

Also, I hope it is possible at some stage to think in terms of an Economic Security Council. The issues that we are talking about—debt, environment, Africa—are not just simple technocratic, economic propositions; they are also political issues. They are not just issues that can be debated only in the World Bank and in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They also need to be debated in United Nations forums. But the evidence so far has been that these forums are too large.

Why not think in terms of an Economic Security Council, small and manageable, and where the right of veto can be exercised, so that the countries with financial clout are reassured that there will not be irresponsible actions? This would bring the major development issues within the framework of the United Nations—both for debate and decision-making.

While these six plans of action may not be the most decisive ones or the most important ones, we do need now to get from words to action. We need to demonstrate in the 1990s that we are not the helpless spectators of uncertain events; rather that we have the capacity to lead, to shape events, as we go along. And we need to demonstrate, in the words of the late Olof Palme, that we tried another path than the march to folly. □

Mahbub ul Haq, special adviser to the UNDP administrator, is a former minister of planning and finance of Pakistan. This article was adapted from a speech to a seminar on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations system of technical cooperation for development.

Making foreign aid work

from page 3

Certainly, developing countries need technical assistance; but to maximize its effectiveness, the foreign experts who supply it should be able to work closely with the primary beneficiaries of the aid at all stages of a project. Financial assistance is also warranted, but real accountability requires widespread public knowledge in recipient and donor countries about the allocation and use of aid resources.

The anti-poverty approach to aid is limited and focused on the needs of the poor. Applying it would be an answer to Hancock's stinging observation that "public money levied in taxes from the poor of the rich countries is transferred in the form of 'foreign aid' to the rich in the poor countries" (p. 181).

I think the foreign aid establishment has played on the honest, humanitarian impulses of voters in donor countries. Aid has been a cover to justify many financial flows, some warranted and some perhaps not. This is why books like *Lords of Poverty* strike a sympathetic chord with the voting public. Aid is in deep trouble if those voters lose confidence in the anti-poverty nature of aid.

For this reason, it might be best all around to reserve the donor government budget line called "official development assistance" to anti-poverty programmes in developing countries. It would also make it easier for the staffs of aid agencies to insist within their own bureaucracies on working more closely with the direct recipients of aid in the design of programmes and projects.

Initial applications of the model might be quite limited, since "people power" is not something that is within the ability—let alone mandate—of aid-giving institutions to engineer. However, ideas and information spread across borders with ever-increasing ease and change people's expectations of what is necessary and what is feasible.

Indeed, not all that much is certain about how to do official assistance on a consultative, anti-poverty model. Continuing experimentation would be needed. But building on a model grounded in helping people mobilize for their own development seems a promising approach, one that could become part of an accelerating evolution of more effective and responsive political institutions in developing countries. □

Barry Herman is an economist with the United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs in New York.

international development news

Brazil

Safe biotechnology enhances soybean crop

by David Mangurian

In Brazil, soybeans are the stuff of superlatives, replacing coffee as the country's largest agricultural export. Farmers there produced 18 million tons of the crop in 1988 on 10 million hectares of land, accounting for 13 per cent of total exports and earning the country $3.5 billion in foreign exchange.

The country's impressive soybean production—which is double today what it was just 15 years ago—is achieved by employing the most modern technology. At the same time, Brazil has demonstrated that big-time agriculture need not rely solely on massive applications of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which are costly and environmentally harmful. Instead, researchers have learned to harness the forces of nature to help increase soil fertility and combat pests.

The problem confronting Brazilian researchers was to find a kind of nitrogen-fixing bacteria that would survive in hot and acidic soils and compete successfully with other bacteria on the soybean roots. They have been successful in their search for a substitute for nitrogen fertilizer, which typically accounts for some 75 per cent of a farmer's fertilizer costs.

The research was carried out at the National Soil Biology Research Program, located 50 kilometres west of Rio de Janeiro. The laboratory is part of Brazil's national agricultural research agency, EMBRAPA, which received a $70.8 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to improve facilities and finance staff training.

Although nitrogen is the major component of our atmosphere, it must be converted to a form plants can use. In nature, this is done by certain kinds of bacteria which attach themselves to the roots of soybeans and other plants.

The EMBRAPA researchers discovered nitrogen-fixing bacteria for a number of crops, but the biggest impact has been on soybeans.

Most Brazilian farmers now inoculate their soybean seeds with nitrogen-fixing bacteria. As such, they avoid the need for nitrogen fertilizer, thus saving some $1 billion annually and making Brazilian soybeans very competitive on the world market.

Researchers have also sought nature's help in combating insect pests. One of the two principal soybean pests is the velvet bean caterpillar.

A natural enemy of the caterpillar was found to be a virus. Researchers at EMBRAPA's National Soybean Research Center, located in Londrina in the southern state of Paraná, developed a method of isolating the virus and mixing it with clay powder. The farmers mix the powder with water and spray it on their crops. A small packet of the powder, costing about $1.00, is sufficient to spray one hectare.

A farmer can also make his own spray by collecting caterpillars killed by the virus. These are frozen and, when the next soybean season comes around, are liquified, diluted with water and sprayed on the crops. The virus contained in 50 dead caterpillars is sufficient to treat one hectare.

The virus pesticide costs up to 75 per cent less than chemical applications—or nothing at all if the farmer produces his own—and it does not add toxic chemicals to the environment.

In 1989, this biological control method was used on 6 per cent of Brazil's soybean crop, saving the country an estimated $43 million. Brazilian scientists are uncovering the subtleties of nature, and in so doing are saving farmers money and protecting the environment. □

Inter-American Development Bank

Inter-American Development Bank/David Mangurian

Viral pesticide being sprayed on 50-day-old soybean crop at the National Soybean Research Center, Londrina, Brazil, to kill velvet bean caterpillars.

Ghana

Sawdust becomes fuel

Briquettes made from sawdust could offer a very economical substitute fuel for ***Ghana's 16 brick and tile factories.***

Each year, these factories burn 72,000 tons of wood for fuel while 90 per cent of the sawdust produced by Ghana's 100 sawmills goes to waste. Simply converting half of this sawdust into fuel briquettes would satisfy all the energy needs of the factories.

The sawdust briquette factory in Akim Oda is currently the only one supplying this kind of product. Recently, production has tripled, to 3,000 tons per year.

The National Energy Bureau envisages using the sawdust briquettes as a weapon against deforestation. Some 112,000 hectares of forest are destroyed each year to supply wood for fuel. PANOS □

Plastic trees for desert forests

by Anthony Lake

Madrid—Spanish inventor Antonio Ibañez Alba claims to have developed an artificial tree which, he says, is capable of making deserts turn green within 10 years if used in sufficient numbers alongside natural trees.Several North African nations are committed to trying out the device, including Libya which is planning a pilot scheme of 30,000 to 40,000 trees.

Ibañez Alba, an electronic engineer from Barcelona, says his invention, coupled with reforestation programmes of natural trees, will turn desert areas green by changing the meteorological patterns in the desired zones, principally through the increase of precipitation. "If rain is caused by the meeting of cold and warm air, all you need to do is create a source of low temperatures to spark precipitation", says Ibañez Alba. "That", he adds, "in a nutshell, is what this tree is all about".

The tree creates cooler air by absorbing the moisture that condenses onto its surface during the cold desert nights and retaining it in the body of the tree. In the heat of the day, the moisture is slowly released, cooling the air. The tree—between 7 and 10 metres tall—is the product of four years of research and laboratory tests. It is made from inexpensive, fire-resistant polyurethane and phenolic foam, and imitates the stages of evaporation and condensation of a natural tree but does not require artificial or natural irrigation.

Similar to its natural counterpart, the tree is divided into three parts: roots, trunk and leaves. The stiff tubular trunk is filled with a polyurethane material which is riddled with channels which absorb water by capillary action. Several layers of polyurethane of different densities were designed to retain water and release it slowly during the course of the day. At the base of the trunk, the density of polyurethane is 6 kilograms per cubic metre, while at the top it is 4.5 kilograms per cubic metre.

Because of the high winds in desert areas—sometimes as high as 140 kilometres per hour—the trees need strong roots. These consist of three hollow tubes with holes along their sides arranged like a tripod at the base of the tree. After planting, polyurethane injected into the tubes at high pressure oozes out into the soil to form long extrusions of polyurethane. These cool after 30 minutes and can extend up to 20 metres from the tree to give a strong anchorage.

"If we could build and plant artificial woods with millions of these trees and then sow natural trees in the same number and percentage once the cycle of rain patterns has begun to take place, within a 10-year period the deserts could be reforested", says Ibañez Alba.

The inventor believes the main advantage of his tree is that it requires no maintenance, and he cites the recent case of reforestation programme in Nigeria that failed because of lack of irrigation and skilled labour. □

New Scientist

Sudan

The plough, the camel and the donkey—small changes

by Mohammed Siddig Suliman

Darfur, Sudan—Efforts to convince farmers in this drought-plagued province to use donkeys to pull a new kind of plough have shown that the acceptability of new technology depends largely on whether the farmers believe it will be of any use to them. Once credibility is established, the changes spread rapidly.

The farmers who depend on rainfall instead of irrigation in the semi-arid environment of western Sudan are not presented with a lot of possibilities for innovation. And with rainfall failing them repeatedly in recent years, they can't afford to take many risks.

So it is no surprise that introducing new farming techniques here requires a lot more than just handing farmers the new technology, no matter how "appropriate".

The Kebkabiya Smallholders Project, sponsored by Oxfam, a London-based non-governmental organizaion, is located in Darfur, a remote region of western Sudan. The agricultural project was set up with the goal of helping the most disadvantaged farmers in the area, engaged in rain-fed subsistence agriculture, to increase production of crops such as millet, sorghum and, more recently, groundnuts which have been introduced as a cash crop.

Traditionally most cultivation in the area was done by hand rather than relying on animal traction. Camels have been used for animal traction by richer farmers for some time but the project's researchers found that many smallholders were eager to find an affordable alternative to the camel plough, which would both reduce human labour and increase productivity.

Several studies in the area indicated that donkeys were a possible alternative to camels for pulling ploughs. About 70 per cent of households were found to own at least one donkey, which was generally used as a pack animal for transport and fetching water. The problem was to design a new, lighter, less expensive plough that would enable poorer farmers to put their donkeys to work in the fields.

The British-based Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), working for the Energy Research Council of Sudan to help develop animal traction technologies began its involvement in Oxfam's Kebkabiya project in 1988.

At first, their collaborative work focused on designing a scaled-down version of the traditional camel plough. An all-steel mould-board instrument, it was taken up enthusiastically by the farmers, but its heavy design was actually better suited for use in damper, heavier soils than those found in the Kebkabiya area. It is also awkward to handle and relatively expensive.

The search for alternative plough designs better suited to the area turned up a new model, based on an ard design that can be traced back to the earliest days of agriculture in the Nile Valley.

The ard design works on the same principle as a chisel plough, which is widely used in Europe. It is cheaper than the mould-board because steel is only used for the tine, which digs into the ground. The main frame is made of wood. This also makes the plough lighter and easier to handle.

Rather than flipping over the soil, as the mould-board plough does, it merely cracks it, reducing soil moisture loss but still facilitating water infiltration. While not a replacement for the mould-board plough, the ard design gives farmers more choices.

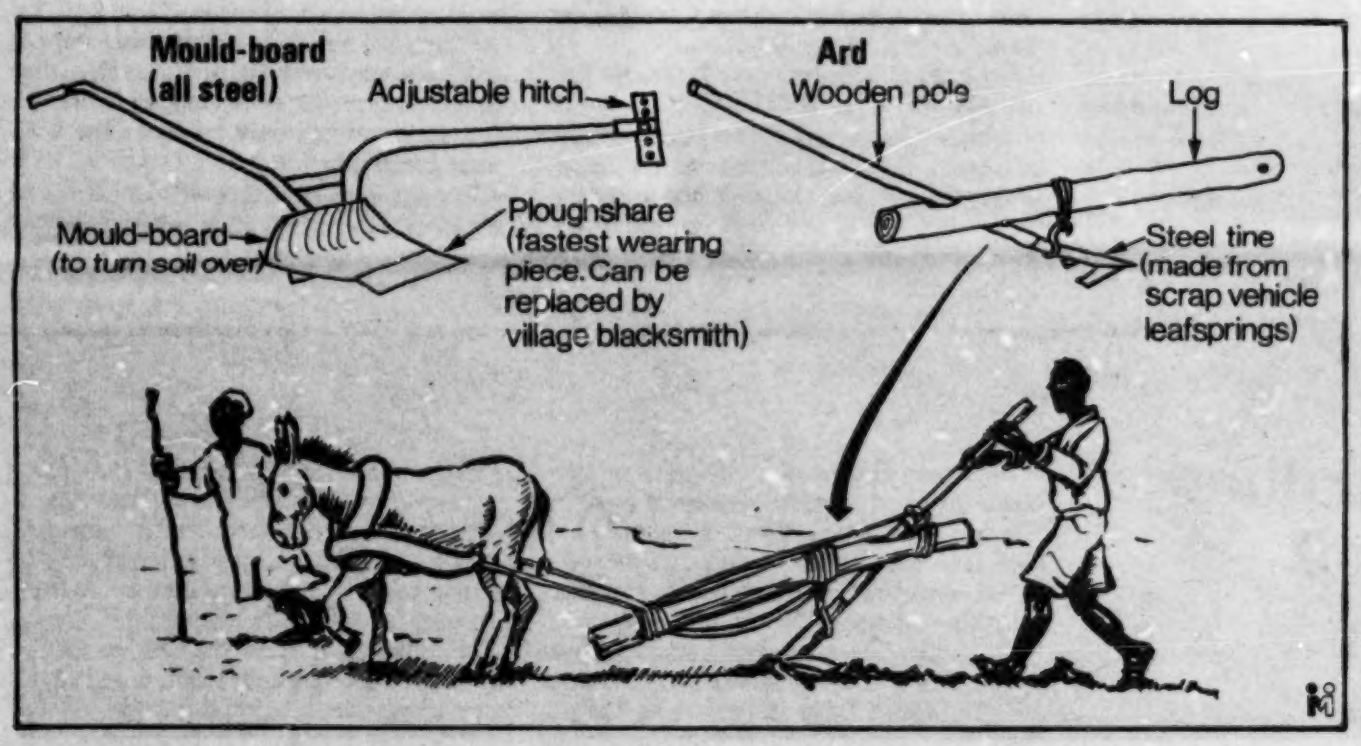
Getting the word out to farmers is a key component of this project. Workers trained in using the plough and feeding and training of donkeys are selected by the local community rather than being brought in from outside.

The problem was to design a lighter, less expensive plough that would enable poorer farmers to put their donkeys to work in the fields.

In the past two years, 200 mould-board ploughs have been produced by three local blacksmiths, who have been trained to manufacture ploughs which would otherwise have to be imported at substantial cost from the town of Nyala, some 360 kilometres to the south.

Mould-board ploughs have been distributed through the region and sold at market value, without subsidy. Also, during the past year, 20 ard ploughs have been made and sold. The mould-board ploughs sell for 320 Sudanese pounds, the equivalent of $71 or the sack of millet which would feed one family for a month. Ard ploughs cost half as much.

GEMINI □



Ethiopia

A plough for fragile soils

by Jack Reeves

A new kind of plough was unveiled last October after nearly six years of research and development at Ginchi, a station of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), about 60 km west of Addis Ababa.

The researchers presented the broadbed-maker plough, a combination of two traditional wooden-frame ploughs to which are attached two winged metal ploughshares which scoop the soil toward the middle and mound it. The result is a series of broad, raised beds 15 cm high, 80 cm wide, separated by 40-cm-wide furrows. This work, normally done by hand, saves labour—up to 40 per cent over traditional mounding methods.

The benefits of this tillage device are many. The greater water evacuation as a result of using the plough allows for earlier planting. These "extra" growing days permit sowing of long-duration crop varieties, or two short-duration crops can be grown sequentially. The use of high-yielding varieties that respond better to fertilizer increases yield even more.

The technology also contributes to sustainable agriculture: planting early helps establish a vegetative cover in the early part of the rainy season, thereby diminishing soil erosion.

IAR's Vertisol management research and development work was conducted by five Ethiopian agencies—the Institute of Agricultural Research, Alemaya University of Agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture, Addis Ababa University, and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Ethiopia—and three international organizations—the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, India, the International Board on Soil Research and Management, Thailand, and the International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA).

The broadbed-maker and the accompanying land-management technology has wide application throughout Africa. Vertisols, or black cracking clay, make up 3 per cent of Africa's land area, covering some 85 million hectares in sub-Saharan Africa. They account for some 13 million hectares in Ethiopia alone. □

Floppy development news

International Project News is a new electronic venture designed to keep people in touch with what is going on in development around the world. It will provide information on computer floppy disks about hundreds of development projects. It will be necessary to have access to an IBM-compatible computer to use the service.

The floppy disks, issued quarterly and each covering about 200 projects, will give brief, practical and interesting information on development projects, rather than scientific research.

If someone, for instance, were working on a livestock project in Africa and discovered a plant that would be extremely suitable for use as live fencing, Project News would like to hear about it. And that person would also be able to find out about other people using green or live fences in Latin America, Asia and so on.

The important thing about Project News is that it will put people with similar interests in touch with each other. They can be involved in livestock, crops, trees, fish farming, etc., provided it is a new idea. The service would like people to write down exactly what they are doing and how they are doing it.

Project News will report on things that people have found out through practical experience. Someone rearing calves, for instance, will be able to find out about designs for small calf housing for outdoor use.

The first disk is available; the cost per year for four disks is $50. For more information, contact Andrew Speedy, Agricultural Science Building, Oxford University, Parks Road, Oxford, UK. BBC □

National television network planned for Tanzania

by Shamlal Puri and Nizar Vistram

Dar es Salaam—More than 30 years after independence, media revolution through the small screen has eluded Tanzania, one of the few countries in Africa that is still without a national television network.

Now, if all goes well, mainland Tanzanians will have their own national commercial television network, perhaps by the end of this year.

Arguments for and against TV in the Tanzania mainland have been raging since 1964, three years after independence in 1961. At that time the cost of providing a TV network for Dar es Salaam would have been around $1.2 million. But of a population of 170,000 at the time, a mere 3,000 would have benefitted. A TV network at the time could have been criticized as a "white elephant".

As well, the then president, Julius Nyerere, maintained Tanzania was not ready for a TV network of its own. His argument at the time was that Tanzanians had first to learn to walk before they could run. He said Tanzania had other priorities than enjoying the luxuries of watching television.

Today, Tanzanians are strongly in favour of television. The country's information and broadcasting minister, Ahmed Hassan Diria, recently provided parliament with a government expert report on the project.

In a strange divide, the Indian Ocean island of Zanzibar, which forms part of Tanzania through a federation, has its own colour television network which has never been shared with the mainland. Operating costs for its TV network, which broadcasts three hours each day, are only half a million dollars a year.

In reality, there is no shortage of television sets in mainland Tanzania. Under the country's liberalized import laws, affluent Tanzanians have imported TV sets and video recorders which are used to screen video films.

The video industry is thriving in Tanzania with commercial video libraries catering to both Indian and Western film audiences. Many of these videos are pirate copies smuggled from India, Britain or the Middle East, particularly Dubai. However, the prohibitive prices of imported equipment have made television viewing beyond the reach of the average Tanzanian.

Diria said a feasibility study will be carried out before Tanzania decides to embark on negotiations with both foreign and local investors. Potential investors are being sought from Japan, Britain, Canada and the United States with investments channelled through international agencies such as the Commonwealth Development Corporation, the World Bank, the British Overseas Development Administration, Crown Agents and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The ministry report says Tanzania will have to raise at least $23.6 million to set up its own national TV network. Of this, up to $20 million will be spent on the importation of modern broadcasting equipment, including a high-frequency transmitter.

The operation of the national network will cost an estimated $3.6 million a year. But most of this could be recouped through licensing fees and advertisement revenue.

On the question of the ownership of the TV network, the report recommends that it be vested in a public body with the option of local private investments in this public body. The government should own 51 per cent of the shares.

An ordinary TV set costs between $2,000 and $2,500. Planners are concerned that even if Tanzania gets its own national TV network, only rich Tanzanians will have access to it. An ordinary Tanzanian whose pay is $12 per month can hardly afford to slump on the settee of his living room to enjoy a Tanzanian programme, an episode of *Dallas, Dynasty, Neighbours* or a situation comedy imported from the West.

Television will also be denied to people in the countryside because Tanzanians living in villages have no access to electricity. This problem can only be overcome with rural electrification.

Experts say Tanzania could also take a cue from India by acquiring TV sets that work on solar power for the rural areas.

Analysts say that if the government imported TV sets directly for distribution to schools, colleges, community centres and villages, the element of profiteering and middlemen would be cut.

Community viewing is another answer to reduce the number of sets purchased by a neighbourhood.

Planners say Tanzania could take a cue from India by acquiring solar-powered TV sets for the rural areas where there is no electrification.

On a long-term basis, the report recommends the local manufacture of TV sets so that more people could afford them. Local materials can also be utilized usefully to manufacture TV sets. For example, local firms can fabricate the chassis and cases in Tanzania. This may decrease dependence on the importation of materials and also create jobs in the country. □

Newslink Africa Ltd.

Soft-pedalling Cuba's oil shortage

by Fidel Prieto

Havana—Thousands of Chinese-made bicycles have flooded into the streets of Havana, as more and more Cubans respond to the government's campaign promoting this form of transport to ease the island's fuel shortage.

The first shipment of bicycles arrived from Beijing a few months ago as part of an agreement between Cuba and China for the purchase of 500,000 units and the building of bicycle factories here.

Havana's main production and service centres, universities, hospitals, and scientific and research institutions recently distributed bicycles to students and young workers, who make up two-thirds of Cuban public transport users.

Some 120,000 new bicycles are expected on the streets of Havana by the first quarter of 1991.

Early last year, president Fidel Castro proposed the use of bicycles to help overcome the fuel crisis caused mainly by the Soviet Union's failure to deliver its usual supply of oil to Cuba. Cubans were sceptical until the two-wheelers began to arrive by the thousands.

Wilfredo Espinosa, president of the Highway and Traffic Commission of Havana, said the growing number of bicycles in the country requires the improvement of bicycle repair services and the creation of parking lots.

Authorities also need to adjust current traffic laws to coordinate the flow of motor vehicles and bicycles in Havana and other cities. Maj. Alvio Gil of the National Police said the Traffic Commission is studying possible measures like reserving some lanes or entire roads for bicycle users. He stressed people should avoid using bicycles at night and should respect traffic signs.

Some companies are said to have organized theoretical and practical courses on traffic rules for their employees.

Authorities say Havana could gradually become like Beijing and Hanoi, as more and more bicycles appear on the roads. About 400,000 people out of a population of over 10 million are expected to be using bicycles for transport by the end of 1991.

Milton Grant/United Nations

Heavy traffic is not a problem in Havana, but the oil shortage is.

In December, president Fidel Castro announced publicly that the USSR would continue to supply spare parts for machinery and industry in 1991, but warned that Cuba will have to operate on three million tons less oil, which was interpreted to mean that an agreement to this effect had been reached with the USSR.

Insufficient fuel delivery from the USSR, based on a 13-million-ton annual contract, reached crisis proportions at the end of August, and the government declared drastic energy-saving measures.

An emergency programme adopted by the government for this "special peacetime period" attempts to maintain the modest consumption level of the population and give priority to activities directly related to internal consumption or foreign currency exports.

In this way, the government is concentrating its limited resources on the food programme, tourism development and the biotechnological and pharmaceutical industries.

The shutdown of several factories, suspension of some productive activities, and deterioration in transportation services, particularly in the cities, are the most visible consequences of the situation, although they have not resulted in increased unemployment.

But despite drastic cuts in fuel supplies (30 per cent for private cars and 50 per cent for public vehicles), a number of motor vehicles continue to circulate in Havana as if the oil crisis was already over. IPS □

the UN system at work worldwide

world review

economic and social information

Africa braces for famine

from page 1

According to FAO reports, drought has reduced harvests in all of the countries bordering the Sahelian zone, from Mauritania to the west to Ethiopia in the east. Of most concern

The Horn of Africa

is the rapidly deteriorating situation in Sudan and the continuing food emergency in northern Ethiopia, where FAO estimates that nearly one million tons of food aid will be required this year.

Ethiopia's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission estimates that some 4.3 million Ethiopians will need food aid and other assistance at least until next September when a new harvest begins. Crop failures in the southern lowlands are comparable to those in 1984-85 which killed possibly one million people nationwide.

In both countries there are increasing reports of rampant malnutrition and undernutrition. Animals and people have already begun to die. In addition to crop failure, the region is also suffering from the loss of grazing land and inadequate supplies of drinking water.

On recommendation of the special representatives of the United Nations secretary-general for emergency relief operations in place in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, preparations for emergency conditions in affected areas of all three countries were stepped up last October. Civil war continued to be the major stumbling block to relief operations.

Special measures, such as "corridors of tranquility" to allow relief supplies to reach vulnerable groups have been negotiated with governments and rebel forces in both Ethiopia and in southern Sudan. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) arranged for "days of tranquility" or cease-fire periods when medical teams could carry out immunization programmes for children in affected areas.

Much of the hunger in northern Ethiopia is a direct result of devastating civil warfare. In December, the World Food Programme (WFP) successfully negotiated an agreement between the government and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) to reopen the key Red Sea port of Massawa to shipments of emergency food aid under United Nations auspices in January.

The port town, besieged by the EPLF and closed off since February 1990, is considered critical for relief operations as it is the most efficient route for food shipments into Eritrea. WFP has also been carrying out round-the-clock airlifts of food to the besieged city of Asmara, the nearby capital of Eritrea. Rebel strategy has been to starve out or capture government-held Asmara, described as the ultimate prize in their three-decade war for independence.

Sudan

After two consecutive years of crop failure in Africa's geographically largest nation, Sudan needs at least 300,000 tons of cereals to ensure food supplies this year. An appeal issued by FAO in December was based on results of a crop assessment mission by its Global Information and Early

SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
LIBERIA
ANGOLA
MOZAMBIQUE
Countries Expecting Food Emergencies in 1991
The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
MAP NO. 3609 UNITED NATIONS JANUARY 1991

Warning System which carried out extensive on-site inspections.

According to FAO, the food deficits, caused by drought, will be most severe in the western regions, particularly North Darfur and North Kordofan and in the Red Sea Hills, areas hard hit in 1984-85. FAO noted that cereal prices in local markets had already risen to levels beyond the purchasing power of much of the population by December.

The ongoing warfare in the south of Sudan prompted the organization of the Operation Lifeline Sudan in April 1989. During the first year of the supply effort, Operation Lifeline brought humanitarian relief to over two million persons. The operation, relying on tenuous agreements between the goverment and rebel forces and run by UNICEF and WFP and funded by Western governments, has been authorized to continue for the foreseeable future.

The Office of the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in Mozambique and the government place the number

Mozambique

of peasants requiring emergency food assistance at 1.9 million of a population of over 14 million.

A fragile cease-fire between rebel Renamo forces and the government has allowed many of the displaced persons to return to their lands in areas once controlled by rebel forces. Still, there are severe food shortages being experienced in central provinces of the former Portuguese colony, especially in Zambezia. Peace talks in Rome and Nairobi promise further improvements in the security situation which has severely impeded relief efforts.

Angola

Following an appeal by the United Nations secretary-general for special relief in November, a major United Nations emergency relief effort has begun to ease the famine affecting nearly two million people there. A recent report by the United States Department of State said that agricultural production in the south is down by 75 per cent and villagers are eating roots and seeds to stay alive.

United Nations truck convoys from Luanda and from neighbouring Namibia, granted safe passage through "corridors of peace" by the government and UNITA, the rebel forces, have been able to bring relief supplies to the nine affected central and southern provinces of the country. Air and rail deliveries will be required until harvests later this year. A significant amount of aid must be used to repair and upgrade the rail infrastructure so that aid shipments can be moved.

Liberia

The political and social upheaval which has progressively devastated Liberia since December 1989 has disrupted the lives of at least half of the approximately 2.5 million people there. The civil war has also created problems in the neighbouring countries of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, which have been inundated by over 600,000 Liberian refugees. UNICEF is providing basic health, sanitation and household food needs for more than 1.1 million people in the area, 70 per cent of whom are women and children.

In a show of support, host populations in the neighbouring countries have shared their meagre resources with incoming refugees, thus avoiding the necessity of establishing refugee camps which would have further marginalized this population and created an even greater strain on governments and the international donor community.

War the common threat

Clearly, the life-threatening disruptions in all of these countries have been provoked in large part by brutal and often endless civil wars. Recent coups d'Etat in Chad and Somalia again highlight the syndrome. Even when drought is the primary factor in crop failures, the resources drained by military activities in these countries make marginal populations even poorer, more isolated and vulnerable. No improvement in the weather will make much of a difference for millions of Africans caught in the crossfire.

aid

Major US food aid overhaul

Washington—The United States congress has decided to base its decisions regarding food aid allocations to developing countries more on need than politics and commercial gain. This new emphasis represents approval of the first major overhaul of food aid programmes in 30 years.

Humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmers combined their efforts to get these major changes enacted in the 1991 farm bill, of which the so-called "Food for Peace" programme is an important part.

Among other provisions, the new law will:

—transfer more food aid from traditional areas of strategic interest to the United States, such as Central America and Egypt, to more needy regions, particularly sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia;

—permit the president to forgive some of the accumulated multi-billion-dollar debt accumulated by developing countries from previous shipments of food assistance;

—prohibit the handling of food aid by military forces unless there is no other way to feed people in an emergency;

—require regular audits of food for peace programmes to cut down on corruption and abuse in shipping and distribution of food aid;

—streamline the bureaucracy that deals with food aid in order to eliminate some of the institutional infighting within the United States government that has long characterized the programme.

The changes approved by congress in November are certain to have an important impact on the way food aid is allocated, according to NGOs which have worked on the new legislation.

Under the new system, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will be given responsibility for about $1 billion in grant programmes, while the department of agriculture will have the final decision for $1.9 billion in commercial programmes used for developing new markets for United States food exports.

Like its predecessor, the new law requires it to be used to advance United States foreign policy interests, but narrows the definition of that policy to improving the food security of recipient countries.

This provision could strengthen the hands of those critics who have argued that the dumping of United States food aid in Egypt, El Salvador and other allies has sometimes had the effect of destroying the market for local producers.

The new law will also remove a requirement that countries be termed "friendly" before they can benefit from the aid.

The law imposes a requirement that 75 per cent of all aid funds be provided to poorer developing countries as defined by the World Bank, and, for the first time, USAID could provide aid to governments which have the greatest need and which have demonstrated a commitment to policies designed to spur food production.

Those governments will also be obliged to provide 10 per cent of the proceeds gained from the sale of United States food aid to local NGOs which work to alleviate poverty.

In addition, USAID administrators must see that food aid is used more to support nutrition and child-survival programmes in poor countries. Only about 8 per cent of the aid is used to support such efforts at present.

On debt, the new law permits the president to forgive debt accumulated by poor countries from past United States food supplies.

Significantly, debt relief is not tied to compliance with World Bank or International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programmes but can be offered to countries undertaking their own economic reform.

Latin American countries may receive additional debt forgiveness if they carry out certain environmental protection of agricultural development projects under the law.

Maggie Standley and Jim Lobe/IPS

OECD aid steady

The 24 members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the organization of industrialized nations based in Paris, will continue to provide about 90 per cent of the approximately $55 billion in official development assistance each year to developing countries.

Countries from northern Europe are the only ones which earmarked more than 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) to development aid, thus conforming with United Nations recommendations.

Of the group, the United States occupied last place with 0.15 per cent and, in the volume of its aid, now ranks below Japan. Japan, in turn, becomes the nation providing the most money in aid to the Third World, through the aid represents only 0.32 per cent of its GNP.

environment & development

General Assembly gives green light to Earth Summit

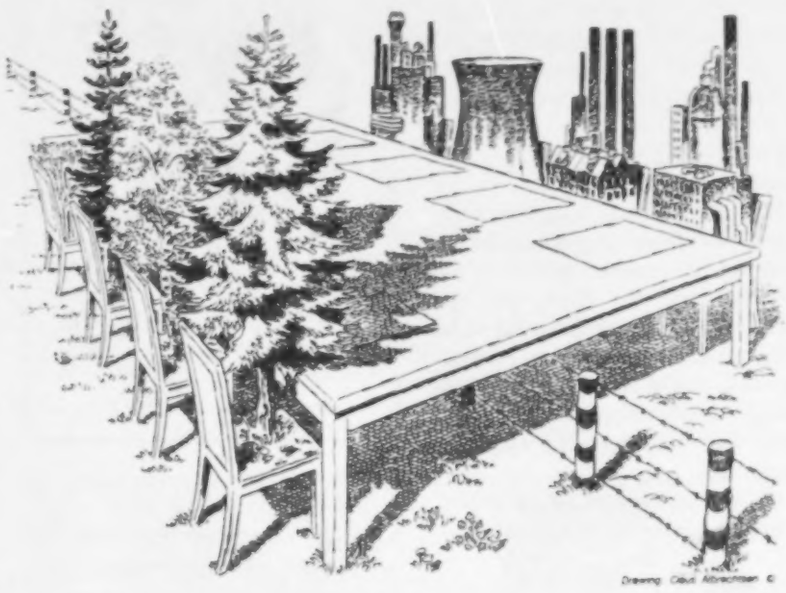
The early phases of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) just underwent the scrutiny of the forty-fifth United Nations General Assembly session, which debated several controversial issues relating to the meeting last December.

In calling for the conference at its session in 1989, the General Assembly hoped to provide a forum for governments to agree on integrated actions which would ensure the security of the planet.

This time, the GA sanctioned the decisions taken at the first substantive meeting of the UNCED Preparatory Committee, which took place in Nairobi last August. The Preparatory Committee had adopted 30 decisions, among them: the role of NGOs in the preparatory process; operation of the Voluntary Fund for UNCED; and the level of representation at UNCED.

Member states were concerned whether these decisions went beyond, or contradicted, the 1989 resolution setting up UNCED which represents a very delicate political balance between developed- and developing-country positions, between environment and development considerations, between Geneva and New York as locations of the secretariat and the meetings of the Preparatory Committee, between national sovereignty and international responsibility, and between present blame and future protection.

The 1989 resolution 44/228 contains the critical elements that make international cooperation for the conference possible, and therefore any attempts to reopen or undermine it are met with resistance, particularly from developing countries.



Outcome of debate

The 1990 General Assembly reaffirmed resolution 44/228, and the political bargain it represents, as the basis for UNCED. It stressed the fundamental interrelationship between environment and development and the need for full integration of the cross-sectoral issues and called on all parts of the United Nations system to cooperate in identifying concrete measures and action to make this a reality.

The issues

Most delegations, North and South, stressed the importance of the linkage of environment and development and that this understanding must move beyond rhetoric and be reflected in all preparatory activities.

Developing countries' need for transfer of environmentally sound technology on fair and favourable terms, and for additional financial resources—the major areas of contention to date—was stressed by developing countries and acknowledged by all major donor industrialized countries, except the United States and Japan.

Developing countries also voiced their concern that financial assistance should not be conditioned on externally-imposed policies.

Most delegations acknowledged the impact of wealth and poverty on environmental degradation. As well as reiterating the well-known arguments of the impact of poverty on the environment, speaker after speaker also pointed to unsustainable consumption patterns in industrialized countries.

A balance between environment and development was also sought in NGO representation in the UNCED process. Equitable representation of appropriate NGOs from the developing and developed worlds is also necessary.

Most delegations recommended that the General Assembly endorse the arrangements adopted in Nairobi for participation of NGOs in the preparatory process, citing their vital role in public awareness. A few delegations cited the analytical and substantive work of NGOs as a driving force for protecting the environment.

Some delegations expressed concern about the loss of biological diversity and the importance of negotiating an effective global bio-diversity convention.

It agreed that the conference will take place from 1-12 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and at the level of heads of state or government. It urged additional financial contributions to the Voluntary Fund for UNCED to enable developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to participate in the conference and its preparatory process, including the working groups.

It set the dates for the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee as 18 March-5 April 1991 (extendable to 12 April) and 12-30 August 1991 (extendable to 4 September) and authorized the Preparatory Committee to continue to apply the provisional arrangements it made in Nairobi for unprecedented NGO participation in the preparatory process. It also linked ongoing environment-related negotiations in other fora to the UNCED process and the work of the Preparatory Committee.

General Assembly snags driftnets

One of the last resolutions passed by the forty-fifth General Assembly called for the immediate cessation of the expansion of driftnet fishing fleets. Further, it called for a moratorium on driftnet fishing in the South Pacific by July this year and in all other ocean areas by July 1992, unless "effective conservation and management measures" are put in place which will "prevent the unacceptable impacts of such practice. . .and ensure the conservation" of its living marine resources.

A driftnet is a vertical curtain of fishnet weighted at the bottom and suspended from floats. Allowed to drift with the current and wind, driftnets have been used for hundreds of years in coastal fisheries. However, recent technological developments in synthetic net material (much lighter and stronger) and in hydraulic haulers (stronger, more compact), have resulted in nets of up to 60 kilometres long. With these nets, it has become possible to fish the high seas, where target species are widely dispersed.

The United Nations resolution expressed concern over the expansion of driftnet fishing into the Atlantic ocean and the reflagging of vessels. The General Assembly also requested the United Nations secretary-general to prepare a report on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing for the forty-sixth General Assembly.

UNCED information network

Electronically accessible information relating to preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is being provided to all interested parties. The UNCED secretariat in Geneva and offices in New York now "post" information on publicly accessible electronic "bulletin boards".

The service consists of background information, such as texts of General Assembly resolutions setting up the conference, and decisions taken by UNCED's Preparatory Committee, as well as information about scheduled meetings and substantive announcements concerning the preparatory process, including, for example, the contents of statements delivered at the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee.

The access to this system is through networks such as Telecommunications Cooperative Network (TCN) and Econet, which have existing arrangements to enable their members to read material posted by the United Nations, with special menus being created for matters related to UNCED. UNCED is facilitating access not only by those already accustomed to this technique, but to broaden access throughout the developing regions of the world, and in languages additional to English. It is also taking advantage of projects supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which are designed to promote affordable access for users based in developing countries, and make information available to the UNDP-sponsored "Sustainable Development Network".

In coordination with UNDP and the International Maritime Organization UNCED is exploring existing satellite systems, such as Imarsat and Peacesat, to enable access to its electronic conferences by those located in remote areas of the globe where national data communication systems are scarce.

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Users on any other system should contact Econet or TCN for information.

Information on local access from other countries can also be obtained from local post, telephone and telegraph facilities.

Egyptian inventor wins award

Geneva (WIPO)—Egyptian scientist Reda Aly Ibrahim Azzam won the 1990 African Environmental Invention Award last November for his "reclaimer-ameliorator-polymeric gel" or RAPG.

RAPG is derived from waste products of petroleum refineries, petrochemical processes and nuclear power plants. It sharply increases the productivity of sandy soils, stabilizes sand, preserves moisture, prevents biodegradation and controls soil erosion. "RAPG enables us to render soils suitable for any given staple food", said Azzam, a professor of applied radiation chemistry. "For instance, we have already cultivated wheat and rice in desert areas using the RAPG technique."

The award, established in 1988, is jointly sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Union of African Journalists (UAJ). It consists of a gold medal and a certificate signed by the heads of the three sponsoring organizations.

energy

Oil shock for Latin America

Washington (IDB)—The Persian Gulf crisis threatens to bring on the third oil shock in less than 20 years, and with it, a severe blow to hopes for reviving Latin America's economies.

Only five petroleum net exporters in Latin America and the Caribbean will benefit from higher crude oil prices, which have increased from $18 a barrel to $25-32/barrel since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. These net exporters are Venezuela, Mexico, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, and Colombia. For the rest of the region, the impact of the price hikes will be severe, even though the countries are somewhat less dependent on petroleum exports today than they were 20 years ago.

Latin America's oil importing countries are dangerously vulnerable to oil price shocks. In fact, they stand to lose twice. First, they will pay more for fuel imports, and this at a time when they are still reeling from their foreign debt burdens. Second, higher oil prices will slow down growth in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which will reduce demand and prices for Latin American commodities.

Even though $30/barrel oil in 1991 would have less severe balance-of-payments implications than the price hike of 1980, at least for the largest economies, there are some worrisome aspects to today's situation. For one thing, the Latin American economies today are weak. In contrast, the region was enjoying a period of robust growth in the 1970s, which was a time of high export commodity prices and easy access to external borrowing called recycling of petro-dollars.

A good example is Brazil, the region's largest oil importer. During the 1970s, Brazil suffered a serious disequilibrium in its balance of payments due to the shocks of successive oil price increases. However, through external borrowing and favourable commodity export prices, the country managed an annual GDP growth rate of almost 7 per cent between 1975 and 1980.

Today's events follow a decade marked by severe losses of income and drops in employment. Brazil's economy is weaker than it was at the start of the decade, and its government is in the process of carrying out difficult programmes of economic reforms.

Oil at $30/barrel in 1991 will mean that this country will need fuel imports of around $6 billion, which would equal 20 per cent of the expected exports. On the face of it, this seems to be a less dramatic development than the situation in 1980, when crude prices doubled to almost $36/barrel, pushing fuel imports to almost 60 per cent of total exports. In 1991, however, the possible oil prices of $30/barrel will increase Brazil's oil import bill by $2.5 billion, which represents 25 per cent of the country's interest payments on its unattended foreign debt.

Despite this grim scenario, Latin America can take some consolation in the fact that it could be worse. To a remarkable degree, Latin America has reduced its dependence on imported petroleum. During 1972-89, a combination of higher domestic fuel prices and oil substitution by other energy sources resulted in a reduction in the share of petroleum in the region's total energy supply from 76 per cent to 55 per cent. Between 1975 and 1989, the region's growth rate in proven crude reserves and installed electricity generation capacity has surpassed that of Asia, Africa and Western Europe.

During this same period, installed hydropower capacity in South America more than doubled, from 30,000 to 70,000 megawatts, to represent a 58-65 per cent share of the continent's total capacity.

But despite this major and largely successful effort, higher oil prices, combined with lack of access to external borrowing and weak export commodity prices, will worsen the economic situation for Latin America's oil-importing countries. Governments will have to make hard choices: either service the foreign debt, including that owed to multilateral institutions, such as the IDB, or maintain imports at levels that will provide for basic economic and social needs.

Uziel Nogueira

The author, a citizen of Brazil, is an economist in the Inter-American Development Bank's Economic and Social Development Department.

medicine

Nigeria battles pill pirates

Geneva—Nigeria is confronting the multibillion-dollar global trade in counterfeit medicines by pioneering a programme to suppress phoney and substandard drugs. Lacking sufficient training and testing facilities, the health services of the poor countries are particularly vulnerable to these illicit drugs. Pill pirates are believed to be responsible for thousands of deaths among unsuspecting patients worldwide.

The Nigerian pilot programme—involving training courses for health workers in identifying fake or substandard medicines as well as support for laboratories to carry out regular spot checks—will be studied very closely by other developing countries. The campaign is backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and its collaborating networks of research and training institutions worldwide. It is made possible by a $68 million loan from the World Bank.

Part of the programme is a drive to alleviate chronic shortages of medicines that have resulted in countless deaths from treatable illnesses.

The illicit trade uses counterfeit copies of life-or-death medicines such as insulin, antibiotics and antivirals. Often they are adulterated with dangerous chemicals. In one recent case, more than 100 Nigerian children aged under six years died after being given paracetamol, a pain killer, containing an industrial solvent.

"There is a severe dearth of essential drugs in Nigeria", says David Radel, a senior population and health specialist in the World Bank's Africa region. "Basic drugs such as antibiotics, antimalarials and agents to eliminate parasites are almost nonexistent. And many of the drugs that are available are either fake, diluted or adulterated."

Pill piracy has assumed huge economic proportions over the past decade, provoking a series of judicial investigations in Europe and North America and leading to tough legislation in the United States outlawing a $500 million "grey market" in prescription drugs.

Much of the trade originates from Third World countries which do not recognize the patents owned by the multinational drug companies. But Thailand, whose substandard look-alike medical products have recently gained a global market, is about to change its policies on intellectual property, and other countries may well follow suit.

The big pharmaceutical companies supplying a $150 billion annual market have been hitherto reluctant to acknowledge the problem. But some of them—such as Britain's Glaxo and Switzerland's Hoffman-La Roche—are beginning to cooperate with WHO to suppress the lethal trade.

The Nigerian initiative is therefore likely to gain a global dimension. The federal government has so far spent $2 million on training and technology and set up specialist medical task forces for each of the 21 states. World Bank assistance is expected now to widen the programme and to establish a development pattern helping other poor countries to confront the pill pirates.

Thomas Land

women

Women's rights ignored

As the United Nations celebrated the tenth anniversary last year of its Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a new report shows that women's rights continue to be ignored worldwide.

The wallchart, researched by the International Women's Rights Action Watch and published with the International Planned Parenthood Federation's (IPPF) *People* magazine, sets out to illustrate how countries which have ratified the convention are actually performing on the most personal sphere of women's lives—their reproductive rights. It draws together four strands that strongly influence women's ability to exercise their reproductive rights: family planning, abortion, marriage and divorce, and maternity protection.

The findings show that violations of women's rights continue, even in Europe and the United States. Only a handful of countries—Cuba, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden—are awarded excellent marks for giving women reproductive choices.

Some other findings are:

—The minimum age of marriage remains low (12) in Chile, Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay, Panama and Sri Lanka and women are exposed to the dangers to their health of early and frequent pregnancy.

—Some countries, such as the Soviet Union and Romania, have ample legislation on equality of the sexes, but a very poor record on sex education or availability of family planning services.

—Angola, Bolivia, Iraq, Laos and Libya provide no family planning support at all.

—In Asia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Korea and Indonesia stand out in their efforts to make reproductive choice a reality for women and their families.

—In the Arab region, Tunisia and Egypt have made noticeable strides in the area of family planning services.

—Husbands in Kenya, Iraq, Mali, Senegal and Tunisia have veto power on sterilization, contraception or abortion, based on the belief that men have rights over their wives' fertility.

cooperation

G15 action secretariat formed

The "Group of 15"* is setting up a secretariat in Geneva. South Commission chairman Julius Nyerere hopes it will serve the developing regions as a whole, in fraternity with the Non-Aligned Movement and the "Group of 77", the grouping of developing countries in the United Nations General Assembly. "If the G15 is successful", according to the former president of Tanzania, "the South will have an organization and the NAM and the G77 will have an Action Group".

Malaysia, Venezuela and Senegal, three members of the G15 steering committee set up during the summit of the 15 South countries' heads of states and governments in Kuala Lumpur last June, each pledged financial support for the interim secretariat. A small permanent staff will take over part of the South Commission's offices in Geneva.

According to Nyerere, the need for a mechanism to help Third World governments coordinate their positions for South-South cooperation as well as in their dealings with the North, has long been recognized but not implemented until now.

At the summit last June, the Group agreed to initiate several projects involving South-South cooperation, including a trade financing facility, the establishment of a South investment, trade and technology data exchange centre, and a business and investment forum for the South.

The Group of 15 will be meeting annually at summit level and have a permanent group of experts to serve them. The next summit is expected to take place in Caracas in June.

**The Group of 15 includes: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe and Malaysia.*

biotech

Food and work for the Third World

Geneva (ILO)—Biotechnologies—the scientific use of living organisms and biological agents to improve plants and animals—may be the solution to alleviating rural poverty in developing countries.

Unlike the Green Revolution, whose benefits largely bypassed small farm agriculture, biotechnologies are potentially accessible to small-scale cultivators and can be used independently of large enterprises.

Researchers from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are examining what effects these new technologies could have on small producers and wage labourers in agriculture. Two case studies, from Nigeria and Mexico, point to some promising results.

In Nigeria, a heavily populated country with a relatively underdeveloped agricultural system, the use of biotechnology in the production of animal feed would improve the nutritional level, create jobs and enhance incomes. The so-called SCP technologies (single cell protein production), which use micro-organisms in combination with natural gases that are abundantly available in the country, would produce animal feed with a particularly high protein content.

Nigeria would no longer need to import expensive feed which is vital for its widespread poultry production. There would be an increase in production in the subordinate animal husbandry sector, which would also create employment opportunities ranging from wage labour to self-employment.

In Mexico, where existing economic and social structures in agriculture are not easily altered, the introduction of advanced plant biotechnologies (APB) can be successful only if preceded or accompanied by a more progressive labour and social policy. As long as credit and market opportunities are restricted and unequally distributed, there can be no guarantee that everyone will have access to the advantages of APB.

women in development

Egypt

The men away, women emerge

by Ekbal Baraka

Sanneya is a very different woman from the person her husband left home three years ago to work in Kuwait. Today, as a result of the Persian Gulf crisis, Sanneya and thousands of other Egyptian women like her wonder what is in store as their men are forced to return from their migrant labours.

This 50-year-old Egyptian peasant farmer with 10 children is no longer the simple, diffident and dependent wife she once was. Now, not only does Sanneya deal confidently with the bank and the cooperative agricultural society, but she has also mastered the delicate art of handling the tax and police departments.

She has cared for her children singlehandedly over the past three years. She has tended the land and now, from the money her husband has sent her, she will supervise the construction of a five-story building to house her entire family.

Sanneya's transformation is not an isolated example. Thousands of Egyptian women in Sohag, a province in upper Egypt, face the same experience. Sohag has a tradition of male migration, one which is being reversed, at least temporarily.

During the 1950s, about 18 per cent of Sohag's population moved to Cairo and Alexandria. Most of them were highly skilled male workers. At that time, migration abroad also started when the Gulf states, flush with oil wealth, began developing rapidly and required migrant workers. A worker could earn in Kuwait or Libya double his income at home.

Today, Sohag has the highest rate of emigration from Egypt to the Arab Gulf states. Between 1984 and 1989, a total of 165,138 men obtained overseas work permits—a figure that is larger than the entire public sector employment in Sohag. The locals have grown accustomed to the wealth that flows into the Egyptian province.

In two villages of Sohag—Al Bagia and Al Osairat—60 per cent of the men have left for the rich Gulf states. Twenty per cent have gone looking for better jobs in other provinces of Egypt. The males who remain in the villages are either too young to leave or are ready to leave at the first opportunity. Only 0.5 per cent of the men have taken their wives along. The result is all-female villages.

A study by Sohag University's Faculty of Arts on the effects of migration on households reveals that the wives who are left behind often suffer from melancholia, introversion and, even occasionally, hallucinations.

Wives live with sexual deprivation and insecurity and may try to make up for it through money. Admits Omm Hisham, the wife of a migrant worker in Osairat, "I demand money from my husband because I dare not leave him with too much money. Men have the legal right to marry four women and if he has money he might spend it on his whims."

Some wives like Sanneya grow in ability and competence through their new roles. Others cannot cope with increased responsibilities, especially with bringing up children alone.

Traditionally, it is fathers who head households and counsel and discipline the young, particularly adolescent boys. If the father is away, his brother or eldest son takes over.

Now overworked women are having to assume roles for which they have no training or customary sanctions.

United Nations/John Isaac

The result is role conflict and tension between mothers and children. Slackness of discipline at school or home has negative results on many youths. The number of failures at school, dropouts and drug addicts among the young is increasing.

Says M. Al Gharib, head of the Sociology Department of Sohag University, "Adolescents are the main victims. Their need for sympathy, care and parental control is far greater than their need for money."

Hassan Hammam, professor at Helwan University, explains, "The image of the father has changed. He is now regarded as just a money bank." And it takes no time for the family to get used to a new standard of living.

Says Afaf, an 18-year-old girl whose father has been working in the United Arab Emirates for several years, "We don't want him to come back. We are used to a certain standard of living which we cannot maintain if my father comes back and works here for low wages."

Hamed Zahran, a professor at Ain Shams University, says broken marriages and homes are a danger. For example, 50-year-old Atteyat, whose husband worked in Saudi Arabia for 10 years, eloped with another man.

"It is a kind of separation in which all are losers: the deserted wife with too many responsibilities and no sense of security, the exhausted homesick husband who loses his position at the top of the family hierarchy, and the children with money to spoil them at the expense of the loss of love and emotional security", says Zahran.

"Migrants earn a lot of money but lose many more important things, like the unity and coherence which has distinguished Egyptian families for thousands of years", comments Hosny el Shobokshy, head of the Social Studies Society.

"I worked abroad for 12 years but I insisted that my wife should come with me", he adds.

However, for families to migrate is not a realistic option in many cases. "How could we go with my husband? How could we leave our lands? We are a household of 12. He would have spent all his savings feeding us there", says Sanneya.

Nevertheless Sanneya is tired of tackling all the day-to-day problems on her own. And she misses her husband.

"When the house is finished, I will ask my husband to come home. It is difficult to go on like this." Sanneya dreams. Now, with his impending surprise return, she is not sure how her life will change. □

Women's Feature Service

Women resist Indian cigarette campaign

by Norma Alvares

When Golden Tobacco Company (GTC), the Indian cigarette giant, launched its new cigarette "Ms" on the Indian market a few months ago, it thought it was doing women a favour. Women's groups thought otherwise.

Equipped with slick ad copy, GTC inaugurated a major media campaign to provide the urban Westernized woman with a cigarette that would be "exclusively hers". The cigarette ad (which had appeared in magazines and billboards all over the country) depicts a young woman, very feminine in dress, fashion and make-up but not glamorous. She is a career woman, ambitious, fun-loving and successful. In short, "what every woman aspires to be".

However, in the tiny state of Goa, on India's west coast, members of Bailancho Saad, a little-known group of women's rights activists, attacked billboards advertising the new "Ms" brand and disfigured them. The actions have prompted wide debate over the marketing campaign and divided the ranks of feminists in their campaigns for equal rights.

Normally, Indian women purchase their cigarettes through either male children or servants. But with exclusively feminine brands on the market, cigarette companies presume women would no longer feel shy about purchasing their requirements directly. In addition to exclusive access to cigarettes, manufacturers hope that direct purchase would also bring social legitimacy to smoking despite growing awareness of health risks.

Smoking does not promote women's liberty and equality.

Confronted with the ad campaign, women's groups have taken different stands. While all agree that smoking is not a habit to encourage, there seems to be disagreement on whether or not a company has the right to promote a product that distinctly bears the warning: "Cigarette smoking is injurious to health."

Thus, Madhu Kishwar, editor of *Manushi*, a feminist magazine, called the ad "absurd", arguing that it amounted to encouraging women to smoke. "This should not be allowed in the name of women's liberty and equality and such ads must be banned", she said, unequivocally condemning the campaign. Others, however, were not so sure.

Saheli, a Delhi-based feminist organization, for instance, felt that women's right to smoke should not be restricted in any way. "They are as free to smoke as the men." Saheli seemed to argue that if there are ads that promote washing machines and motor vehicles and perfumes and women are discerning enough to know whether or not to buy them, why should a cigarette ad campaign be so intimidating? Those who smoke,

▸ 14

Living with garbage: Cities learn to recycle

by Sandra Cointreau and Maarten de Kadt

Short of reducing the amount of garbage we generate, the recycling of household and industrial waste is one of the most effective ways to deal with the mountains of garbage we produce each day. Presently nearly all people in industrialized countries—who generate as much as 1.5 kilos of garbage a day—have access to some sort of solid waste collection or disposal system. Only one quarter of the people in developing countries—who produce little over .5 kilo on average—are provided with these services. Our collective recycling experience is relatively limited but there are a lot of lessons that can be learned from the North and South alike.

Concern about environmental issues leads most of us—governments and citizens alike—to think about separating our wastes for recycling. Setting up viable recycling programmes is another thing entirely. Our societies have been inundated with messages encouraging recycling since the first Earth Day in 1970. And yet, probably less than 20 per cent of the world's solid wastes are being collected for recycling.

Solid waste collection and disposal services accommodate two million tons of garbage, one million in industrialized countries and one million in developing countries. Handling such volume has placed enormous stress on local governments. Reducing garbage generation is a long term goal, but every day, solutions must be found and all experts agree that after reduction of garbage flow, recycling is the most promising.

Source separation of recyclables—separating plastics, glass, metal and paper from household trash, for example—is a chore, but it does generate the highest quality of recyclable materials. In recent years planners have been trying to figure out the best way to motivate individuals in homes, stores and offices to separate wastes for recycling.

In Japan recycling is an accepted part of daily life.

Recycling activity is on the increase in most places both because there are economic advantages to both individuals and local governments. Throughout industralized countries, local governments are mandating source separation and recycling as a means of reducing disposal costs. Cities in developing countries, such as Seoul, Korea, and Manila, Philippines, are following suit. Their goal, in part, is to save on disposal costs and also to save on the costs of importing materials for manufacturing and the energy used in manufacturing.

Recyling planners and managers are scrutinizing recycling experiences, especially in urban areas where the need for rational waste disposal is most pressing. In the process, they are learning a great deal about how recycling works—and doesn't work—in both the industrialized and developing countries. There is a great deal that we can learn from each other's experiences.

In the North

Among industrialized countries, Japan has been exemplary in its recycling achievements, with recycling an accepted part of daily life. Japan has half the population of the United States, but only 4 per cent as much land. Over 30 years ago, Japan began to experience a shortage of land for waste disposal and turned to incineration. It now has about 2,000 incinerators for solid waste. The high costs of incineration have led to a parallel emphasis on recycling.

As a result, as much as 50 per cent of Japan's solid wastes are recycled, largely from the source, before wastes are discharged for collection. The waste generation rate in Japan is only 1 kg per capita per day, as compared with the rate of 1.8 kg per capita per day (nearly double) in the United States.

At the other end of the recycling spectrum in industrialized countries, the United States has lagged far behind Japan, recycling only about 13 per cent of its solid wastes. Lessons can be learned from the United States experience.

Even with a lot of available open land, the United States has a shortage of disposal sites, especially in the more densely populated urban areas such as Seattle, Washington, and the state of New Jersey. Throughout most of the United States, public opposition to new disposal sites has developed to the point where it has become nearly impossible to get public approval even where technically and environmentally acceptable sites are still available.

In large part, opposition has developed as the public has become increasingly aware of contamination problems caused by past waste disposal practices. There are more than 100,000 closed waste disposal sites in the United States which have been listed as probably needing remediation. The cost to clean up these sites will amount to tens of billions of dollars.

To regain the public trust, government has developed stringent regulatory standards for waste disposal. Such standards make it costly to build and operate disposal facilities. The costs for owning and operating new sanitary landfill have increased tenfold in the past decade, to about $80 per ton of waste.

As a result, there are pockets of recycling achievement in the United States. Seattle, Washington, with a goal of 60 per cent recycling by 1998 is now recovering 36 per cent of its solid waste for recycling. The state of New Jersey with a goal of 60 per cent by 1995 is recovering 39 per cent of its total waste for recycling.

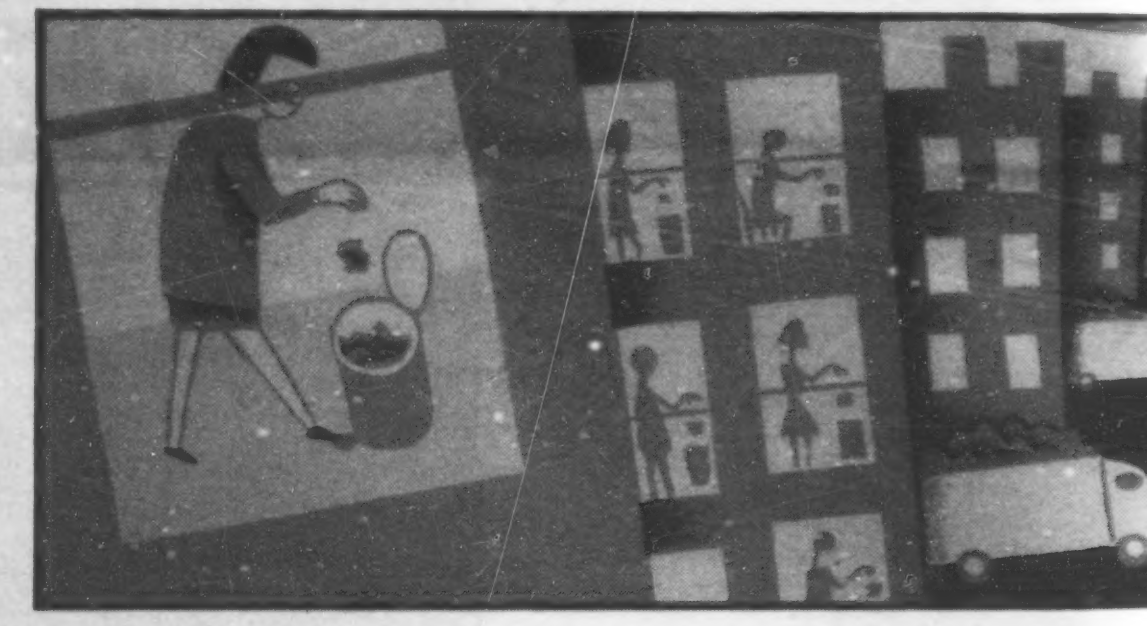
Developing countries are still struggling with the basic task of collecting garbage.

The motivators for Japan and the United States represent both ends of the spectrum of why recycling has been on the increase in industrialized countries. Thus, recycling is being politically driven by public opposition to disposal sites and economically driven by the high costs of disposal attributable to land shortage and tough disposal standards.

These motivating factors, while applicable for recycling in industrialized countries, are not relevant for most developing countries.

In the South

Most developing countries are still struggling with the basic task of collecting garbage. Collection services reach only from 50 to 80 per cent of urban populations. Typically, there are too few collection trucks available to do the job. Lack of money for spare parts leads to lengthy down times, with from 15 to 50 per cent of a fleet being down for repairs on any given day. Uncollected garbage is highly visible in most cities of the developing world, with clandestine piles on open lots and in drainage canals.



The immediate priority for governments in the developing world is to remove solid waste from the urban areas as reliably as possible, and to dispose of it as cheaply as possible. Given the number of important basic needs in developing countries which must go unaddressed because of lack of money, it is doubtful that they will be able to make sanitary waste disposal an investment priority in the foreseeable future.

In most developing countries the predominant method of waste disposal is open dumping—a method which has virtually no capital or operating cost.

Rather than being motivated by lack of disposal options, people in developing countries are recycling in direct relation to industrial demand for materials to use as feedstock. In other words, what is being recycled has some commercial resale value. Many industries in developing countries are dependent on recyclable materials because there are no domestic supplies of raw materials and the imported ones are expensive. Also, industries may be constrained in importing materials because foreign exchange is limited by trade deficits and huge external debts.

The savings in materials costs can be substantial when industries in developing countries use recyclables. To illustrate, a 1988 study in Bangkok, Thailand, showed that recycling led to savings on materials costs of 75 per cent in the paper industry and 10 per cent in the glass industry. A study in 1985 in Cairo, Egypt, showed that plastics manufacturers saved about 50 per cent on materials by using recyclables. In 1983, a study in Peru indicated that recycling led to an annual savings of approximately $20 million in foreign exchange.

Many industries also use recyclables to save on energy consumption. The savings in energy costs are substantial in most developing countries because of their dependence on imported fuel. To illustrate, recycling in Bangkok in 1988 led to savings on energy costs of about 25 per cent in the paper industry and 20 per cent in the glass industry. In 1984 the Chinese city of Shanghai estimated it had reduced industrial energy requirements by the equivalent of 15 million tons of coal during the past 25 years of recycling.

Buy-back centres

Recycling is made easier in some developing countries by having a large number of buy-back (redemption) centres, places where recycled materials can be turned in, available throughout urban areas. For example, there are about 1,000 licensed dealers privately operating buy-back centres in Bangkok. There are about 500 such centres operated by the municipal govern-

ment in Shanghai.

Dealers operating buy-back centres have contractual arrangements with industry to meet quotas and specifications for materials quantity and quality. To obtain materials they buy from an informal network of scavengers. For example, they buy from street buyers who go from door to door with hand carts to purchase materials set aside

Recycling in the North is being politically driven by public opposition to disposal sites and economically driven by high costs of disposal.

by households. Similarly, they buy from refuse collection workers who sort through wastes while on their collection routes. Dumpsite scavengers who pick through wastes at open dumps collect a wide variety of recyclables. Beyond this, they also buy directly from commercial and industrial sources.

Despite the demand-driven nature of recycling in developing countries, the levels of recycling are not high. The amount of waste recycled in most developing countries ranges from a low of 1 per cent in a number of African countries to a high of 10 per cent in several Latin American and East Asian countries. Beyond this, a few countries are exemplary in recycling.

For example, in Cairo, about 22 per cent of the solid wastes are recycled—about 14 per cent are privately recycled by the source and the other 8 per cent are recycled after being discharged to the waste collection system. In Mexico City, an estimated 25 per cent of the wastes are recycled after discharge to the waste collection system—5 per cent by refuse collection workers and 20 per cent by dumpsite scavengers.

Furthermore, there is a government-assisted waste exchange programme in Mexico City by which additional recycling is done between industries through exchange agreements.

It is clear from the data that the levels of recycling are consistently low in developing countries where there is little industrialization, or where the industrial demand does not match the wastes being produced. For example, a decade ago in Nigeria there were thousands of abandoned cars along the roads because there was no local steel mill able to use the scrap metal as feedstock. However, since the construction of a new steel mill designed to use scrap ferrous metal, it is rare to see abandoned cars in Nigeria.

Similarly, within any given country, there is much more recycling practised in the cities wherein industries are located. For example, in Mexico, dumpsite scavengers in some cities may or may not recover plastics, depending on the proximity of plastics manufacturing plants.

To increase the level of recycling in developing countries would involve increasing their industrial base. It would also involve providing technical and financial assistance in establishing the initial network for waste exchange and waste recovery.

Not only would an increase in the industrial base affect industrial demand for recyclables, but it would increase price competition. Currently, because there is too little competition among industries in most developing countries, the prices paid for recyclables are low. Usually, the only ones in the recycling system who make any significant income are the dealers. Dealers mark up selling prices from 50 to 100 per cent over their buying prices.

Organizing the recyclers

The people from whom the dealers buy make only a meagre living—dumpsite scavengers typically make only enough to feed themselves on a day-to-day basis, and only if whole families work at the dump is there enough money for more than essential food requirements.

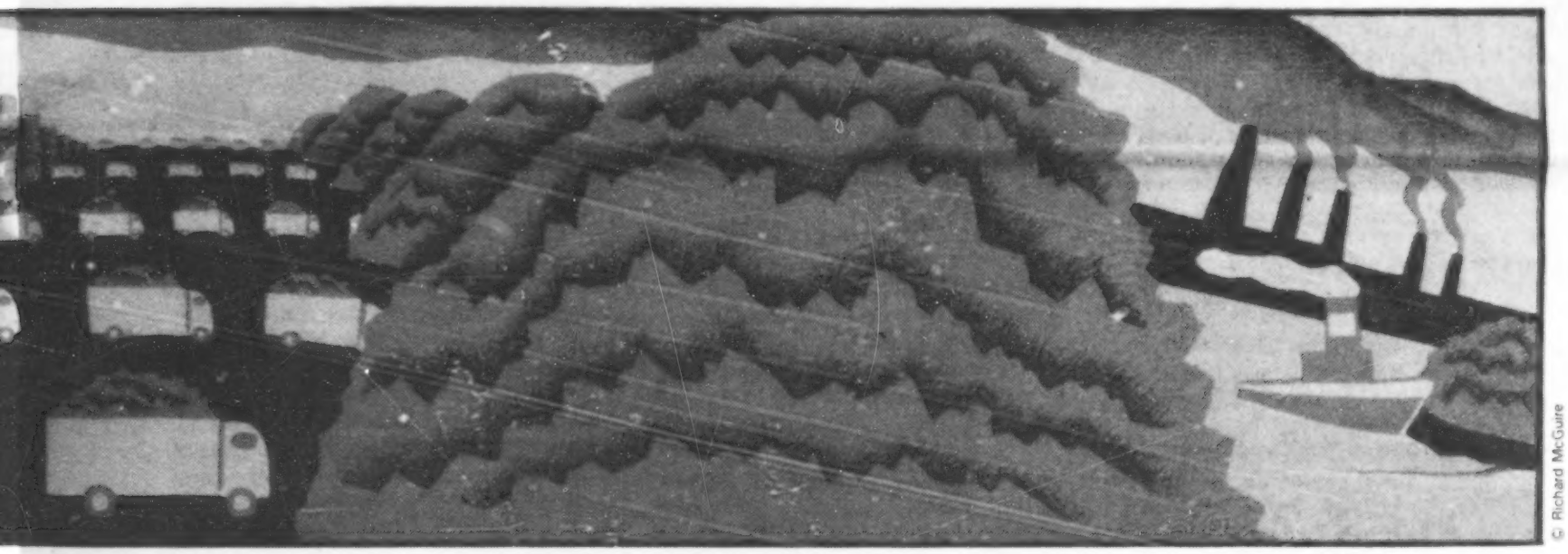
The numbers of individual street buyers, collection workers and dumpsite scavengers involved in recycling represent from 1 to 3 per cent of the urban population in developing countries. There are more than 10,000 dumpsite pickers in Mexico City, and more than 7,000 in Manila, Philippines. In Cairo, there are 12,000 door-to-door waste collectors who privately run the city's recycling system. In Shanghai, the recycling system is run by the government's Shanghai Resource Recovery and Utilization Company which has more than 24,000 employees.

While there are material and energy costs saved by industries from recycling and benefits to nations' trade balance sheets, local governments look on recycling as a problem. Local governments look upon the scavengers involved in recycling as a nuisance, upon the buy-back centres as an eyesore, upon the time spent by refuse collection workers in recycling as unproductive, and upon the shantytowns housing dumpsite scavengers as an embarrassment. For local governments to develop a cooperative role with the recycling system, they need the support of the central government. As it is the nation which ultimately benefits from recycling, it must be the central government which provides the appropriate incentives to support it.

Some innovative efforts are already being made to aid recyclers. In Indonesia, for example, door-to-door buyers have formed cooperatives with the support of the central and local governments. Once united into cooperatives, buyers of recyclables are more empowered to obtain fair prices from dealers who buy recyclables on industry's behalf. Also, they are able to pool their resources to purchase equipment which enables them better to meet industrial specifications and thus obtain higher prices.

In Egypt, with the help of World Bank financing, the community of waste recyclers which also performs much of the city's waste collection through private arrangements, has received upgraded community infrastructure (i.e., water, drainage, roadways) and improved collection and waste processing equipment.

In the Philippines, with the help of the central government, cottage industries have been established to recycle wastes into new products. The government assisted the new companies in networking with sources of waste, and also in finding markets locally and overseas for their products.



© Richard McGuire

In Korea, scavengers at open dumps have been provided with a new community with sturdy new housing, clean water and bathing facilities.

With the pending implementation of source separation and recycling by local government of Seoul, dump site scavengers will be given training to work in the new system.

Since the construction of a new steel mill, it is rare to see abandoned cars in Nigeria.

In Mexico, increasing numbers of specially designed sanitary landfills feature a designated area for waste recovery that enables scavenging to take place after trucks unload and before the waste is buried.

Based on the recycling achievements which various countries have demonstrated, it would be viable to establish a global decade goal for the year 2000 of 20 per cent recycling in developing countries and 40 per cent recycling in industrialized countries (higher levels are attainable thereafter). At these levels, about 600,000 tons per day of solid waste would be recycled.

In Korea, dump scavengers have been provided with sturdy new housing, clean water and bathing facilities.

This level of recycling—20 per cent in developing countries and 40 per cent in industrialized countries—would save 600,000 cubic metres per day of landfill space, and the related costs of disposal. The energy savings to industry would be equivalent to about 3.6 million barrels per day of crude oil, or 6 per cent of the global crude oil production.

For recycling to be successful, local governments must grapple with difficult issues. They must decide how they will separate out recyclable materials and at what stage it should be done. They have to decide not only how they measure garbage and its constituent parts, they have to develop recycling measures as well. What are the markets available to purchase increasing amounts of recycled materials and how can they be developed? Implementation of recycling programmes has to include a great deal of public education to change old habits.

Funding for grass roots public education and participation is essential. Recycling can reduce disposal costs but it requires labour and therefore money to set up buy-back centres and pay workers. Money is also required to hire competent planning and management personnel to solve the many problems that arise from the normal functioning of a recycling programme.

Industrialized countries can learn to produce less garbage. The experience of developing countries may help in this endeavour. Developing countries can benefit from positive and negative experiences of the many different recycling and collection programmes in industrialized countries.

Because the field is so new, it will be essential for local governments to share their experiences as they move ahead. To provide support and limit duplication of efforts, national governments could provide a major service by setting goals, developing source separation and waste reduction strategies, researching recycling markets, examining technologies for materials recovery and reuse, and developing financial arrangements which support local efforts.

National goals, including source separation and waste reduction strategies, developing markets for recyclables, implementing technology for materials recovery and reuse, and increasing financial assistance will provide support for local efforts. International publicity about the successes and failures of existing programmes will diminish unnecessary duplication of local efforts. □

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GATT: Free trade or fair trade?

from page 1

from computer chips to insurance and investment, but these cannot be achieved until the 100 GATT member states reach consensus on the agricultural trade sector.

Stalemate on agriculture

Ironically, these are the first talks under the aegis of GATT that included agriculture, largely at the insistence of the United States. Representing the world's largest exporter of food, the United States negotiators have pushed very hard for sharp cuts in food subsidies and tariffs. Key areas, such as trade in services and intellectual property rights, are also included for the first time.

The December talks were deadlocked, rather than finalized as scheduled, because of the EC's unwillingness—spearheaded by France and supported by Japan and the Republic of Korea—drastically to cut subsidies that they pay their farmers and farm exports by 30 per cent over the next five years. There are 10 million farmers in the EC who depend on billions of dollars worth of subsidies for dairy, wheat, beef and other products enabling them to sell below cost in world markets.

The United States had originally insisted on a complete elimination of agricultural export subsidies and deep cuts in farm programmes. This was supported by the so-called Cairns group of 14 food exporting nations which include Canada and Australia and Third World exporters like Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Hungary. Food importing countries, however, are ambivalent about liberalization as it would raise prices of agricultural commodities.

Concern over TNCs

According to Kenneth K.S. Dadzie, secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which has played a key advisory role to developing countries on the talks, the Uruguay Round should strengthen the multilateral trading system and make it more responsive to the needs of weaker trading partners. Referring to the globalization of corporate activity, Dadzie voiced Third World concerns that corporate dynamics should generate "genuine competition" and "work responsibly for sustainable development in all countries".

However, many critics of the talks, including Brazilian ambassador Rubens Ricupero, the Third World spokesperson at the Uruguay Round, are worried that reforms being pushed through by the industrialized countries could erode the position of the South and concentrate more power in the transnational corporations.

They cite new rules that would force governments to relinquish legislation regulating foreign companies. Proposals to impose strict intellectual property laws in the Third World would lead to the monopoly of modern technology by the North and would force the developing countries, through the threat of harsh trade sanctions, to pay high royalties to foreign patent-holders.

The battle over agriculture has attracted most of the attention and, to some extent, relegated developing country delegations to the sidelines. But there are 15 areas being negotiated in the Uruguay Round and differences over subjects like services, intellectual property, foreign investments and textiles demonstrate that the other objectives of the Round are also far from being reached.

The service sector

For example, international agreements on the service sector—transport, tourism, banking, insurance, telecommunications and others—have long caused friction between Third World and industrialized nations. Many Third World countries, to protect their sensitive sectors—like finance, media and communications, transport and professional and business services—have laws restricting the entry of foreign service enterprises.

Reforms being pushed through by the industrialized countries would concentrate more power in the transnational corporations.

The United States has backed away from its initial proposal for a total liberalization of this sector. The majority of Third World countries, concerned about the takeover of their domestic service sectors by powerful transnationals, sounded alarms about "recolonization" if services were liberalized without compensation, but most would agree to gradual elimination of barriers.

The countries of the South also opposed a similar position among industrialized countries on the matter of intellectual property rights. Industrialized nations intend to seek payment for patents in such vast fields as computers and biotechnology. The majority of Third World countries consider this unacceptable, arguing that this would raise the price of technology transfer and increase their dependence.

The same is true for textiles. The Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA), which industrialized countries imposed in 1974 and which is set to expire later this year, in practice prevents the free export of textiles from countries of the South to those in the North. The industrialized countries would like to extend the agreement.

There is little doubt that the industrialized countries dominate the negotiations for the new world trade rules. However, the Uruguay Round represents a forum in which Third World demands for a fair deal are taken seriously.

Failure of the talks present developing countries with a bleak scenario. The finalization of successful multilateral trade agreements in the Uruguay Round comes at a time when the trend towards regional trade blocs seems to be gaining momentum. The developing countries have made the least progress in setting up viable trading blocs. European, Asian and evolving North American trading blocs place the industrialized countries in a position to do battle if the multilateral talks fail and trade wars ensue. However, as the majority of the world's traders, developing countries have little protection and would find themselves increasingly marginalized as the major players retreat behind regional trade barriers. □

Indian women fight ad campaign...

from page 11

do, whether there are ads or not, and those who don't smoke will see it as just another ad for a product they don't intend buying.

But is it that simple?

The ad itself deliberately seeks to cultivate the impression that a successful, modern woman liberated from old-fashioned ideas and prejudices will not hesitate to relax with a cigarette if she feels like it.

Some women grew concerned that the debate would only advance the manufacturer's promotional campaign rather than hinder it. After all, there are two opinions, two sides to the question, and who really knows who is right? When and if the debate does reach a consensus, the product would be already well entrenched on the market.

Public opinion is turning inexorably against smoking.

Before this could happen in the case of "Ms", the activists of Bailancho Saad struck. GTC targeted its campaign in Goa because of its image of Goan women as urbane, Westernized and fun-loving. According to GTC, they were ready buyers for the product.

The Saad attacked the ad campaign through the media. It objected in press statements to the misappropriation and misuse of the prefix "Ms" to name a cigarette. The prefix "Ms", noted the Saad, has been adopted by feminists to assert their individual identities irrespective of their marital status.

The feminist effort to halt the ad campaign failed. The company went ahead with erecting billboards carrying the "Ms" smoking model (a popular Indian film actress named Deepti Naval), cigarette firmly held in her fingers, presumably on her way to work.

On a Saturday evening, equipped with paint brushes, ladders and red oil paint, Saad members assaulted the "Ms" billboards all over the state of Goa and disfigured them wholesale. On the ad copy which claimed it was a "lady's privilege to smoke" appeared the words, "curse" and "poison".

"We take strong exception to 'Ms' now being used by GTC as a brand name to sell its product and to mislead people into believing that women's liberation means smoking. Equality is denied to women in the economic, social and political spheres. Therefore, such advertisements are a deceitful attempt to dole out equality to women."

The women cited other examples of the tobacco merchants' campaign to increase substantially their Third World market, successfully targeting high-income groups or classes, including affluent or career-oriented women.

"Sportsman", a brand from British American Tobacco (BAT), the world's largest tobacco multinational, has an advertisement campaign in Africa that features healthy football players smoking "Sportsman" after winning a game, while football fans milling around the players sing the BAT signature tune, "There is only one thing in Kenya as popular as football—Sportsman".

"Viceroy Super Longs" is a women-targeted cigarette. The female executive in the cigarette ad confesses she chooses Super Longs because "I'll never smoke a boring cigarette".

The campaigns, of course, are not limited to the developing countries. Ad copy for "Virginia Slims", a cigarette introduced for women in Japan, reads: "Tailored for the feminine hand. Slimmer than the fat cigarettes men smoke." "Uptown", a cigarette brand aimed specifically at the United States Afro-American population, had to be withdrawn because of pressure from blacks themselves who protested the notion of colour-biased cigarettes.

Public opinion everywhere is also turning inexorably against smoking by anyone, man or woman. In India, even while GTC has commenced its campaign to introduce special cigarettes for women, the country's environment ministry has begun to enforce a ban on cigarette smoking in all government offices. Public places are next on the list.

But the key question remains: Have women taken to the "Ms" cigarette in Goa? A survey recently conducted revealed that the cigarette has no women buyers. The cigarette seems to attract college boys who are fond of asking for a "Ms" pack. This is not an unusual phenomenon. It is a general experience that younger men often get interested in items advertised for women. In India, for instance, 60 per cent of women's magazines are reported to be purchased by men.

The Saad activists have urged women's groups all over the country to work for a ban on the "Ms" cigarette ads and suggested a boycott of the product. It has also decided to keep watch over the company's future efforts to sell the cigarette solely to women consumers. It has informed the company that should the billboards be restored, they will meet the same fate as the earlier ones. □

Third World Network Features

ecowatch

Environmental accounting: Figuring in the costs

by John Laird

Environmental accounting is an idea whose time has come. The term may not sound very exciting, but once the concept is refined and put into practice, it promises to be an important tool to calculate more accurately national economic health by including the cost of natural resource degradation.

Hardly a day passes now when we are not informed of some new example of the destruction of nature or worsening pollution—often in the name of progress and development. The atmosphere, the land, the oceans, plants and animals: all of these are now well documented as under serious threat through our impulse to accumulate wealth and material goods—or merely to survive.

The time is overdue to take stock of this destruction and figure its costs into GNP. Enter *environmental accounting*—or, as it is sometimes called, *environmental auditing*.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—the environmental watchdog of the United Nations system—has embraced the concept as a means to steer governments, economists and ultimately investors, businessmen and all of us into sustainable economic practices that no longer threaten the environment.

"Placing a monetary value on the component parts of a healthy ecosystem will always present a problem. But difficult as it may seem, we have to refine economic methods to allow every country to begin including environmental auditing in national planning", Mostafa K. Tolba, the executive director of UNEP, said in a recent interview in Bangkok.

Tolba has recommended that two or three member governments undertake to refine such tools, apply them at the national level and present the results as soon as possible.

Malaysia is one developing country that has volunteered to lead the quest. Malaysian prime minister Mahathir bin Mohamad underscored its necessity last year in a speech at an international conference on tropical ozone and atmospheric change, held in Penang. "We have been misled by the way we have been calling economic growth", he said.

Other environmental costs may be identified, such as the cost of pollution and urban degradation on human health.

In Bangkok, to take one example of a rapidly growing metropolis, some people point to the mushrooming high-rise blocks and the rapidly increasing number of cars as evidence of progress and prosperity. Yet, according to one government official, the high level of vehicle pollution concentrated in Bangkok's concrete corridors will eventually lead to serious respiratory disease for as many as one million Bangkok inhabitants.

United Nations

These hardwood logs bring Gabon hard currency, but what does the loss of the forest cost in the longer term?

In Mexico City, widely regarded to have some of the worst urban air pollution, seven out of 10 newborn babies were found to have lead levels in their blood in excess of World Health Organization (WHO) norms, according to a WHO/UNEP assessment of urban air quality.

"It is very difficult to calculate the loss from air pollution or even gains from using anti-pollution equipment", said one environmental health expert. Normally, the cost of medical care or days lost from work are considered, he added.

There are many other such issues, among them, the cost of poisoning the underground water table through seepage of pesticides and fertilizers, and the safe disposal of toxic and other wastes.

Environmental accounting holds out the prospect that the cost of maintaining a healthy environment will eventually be included in every industrial product or service. The question is, how to implement environmental accounting?

"I think the problem is not the methodology", said UNEP's Tolba. "Probably you can have the cost of the damage calculated easily if you look at the impact of pollution on trees, on human health, on soils, on buildings, on archaeological sites—you can cost this and deduct this from the GNP or GDP."

"The difficulty is, what is the actual price of an ecosystem in its totality?" he added.

"Look at a country like Malaysia. If they are losing the forest, what are they losing? Are they losing [only] the timber, the plants and wildlife which can be useful in getting some medicines? Or are they losing the ecosystem itself?"

So what is the price of that forest that is being lost? There is no economic evaluation of that until now. "It is for the economist to really start putting a price tag on all these functions of an ecosystem in general, and that is the difficulty we are still facing", Tolba added.

"What is costed is the price of wood when you sell it, or the price of the fish when you collect it. But what is the impact of collecting the fish, or overfishing, on the ecosystem? Nobody is costing this, nobody is deducting this from the GNP or the rate of economic growth."

Norway, Sweden, France and, to some extent, Germany are other countries undertaking such environmental accounting exercises, "but it is a matter of probably a couple of years before they can come up with anything concrete", said Tolba.

Environmental accounting is not exactly a new idea. What is bringing attention to it is the need to consolidate it and to place it at centre stage, along with other economic indices. Ecological cost-benefit analysis has been around for a few decades at least.

One example goes back to the Canadian province of British Columbia in the early 1970s when such an analysis was done by opponents of the proposed construction of the High Ross Dam in the Skagit Valley, which would have produced power for the city of Seattle in the neighbouring state of Washington in the United States.

The benefits of proposed power generation were compared to the loss of resources such as fish, lumber and recreational opportunities for residents of the city of Vancouver.

Somehow, a value also had to be placed on organisms which were not being commercially exploited but which were unique. How to put a cost on that—the value of biomass?

The solution devised by a Vancouver-based environmental group was to calculate the amount of solar energy absorbed over the evolution of a species which was facing elimination. The value of such energy was then calculated at current energy prices.

On that basis, when the balance sheet was drawn up, it was found that the value of lost biomass and exploitable resources was greater than the benefits of the dam. The referee for the project, the (United States-Canadian) International Joint Commission, subsequently rejected the construction proposals. The High Ross Dam was never built.

However, to make environmental accounting meaninful—to put a high value on unspoilt nature, biological diversity and their contribution to the quality of life—many such innovative methods of calculating the value of natural ecosystems will need to be devised and gain widespread application. □

John Laird is a freelance writer and editor based in Thailand.

Tracking desertification

As the deserts encroach on more and more of Africa, Australia, Asia and South America, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep track of the land at risk of desertification and the causes of this process. To depict the complex range of areas and processes, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is compiling a World Atlas of Desertification.

UNEP's GRID (Global Resource Information Database) will be used to include all the variables that both cause and reflect desertification.

In fact, UNEP's new atlas will use the term "land degradation" as a more accurate and useful term than "desertification". The new term includes salinization, and sodication, wind and water erosion, and the relationships between topography, hydrology, climate, soil structure and use and vegetation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid zones.

The atlas, which is to be completed by the time of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, will map land degradation at global, regional, national and local levels. It will identify not only those areas already suffering from some kind of land degradation, but also those areas most prone to these problems in the future.

The atlas will be accompanied by two wallcharts at a scale of 1:10 million and will contain the results of global, regional, national and local assessments of desertification. These results will be presented in the form of maps, charts, diagrams and tables, each accompanied by a facing page of explanatory text.

The single most important dataset is the 1:10 million scale Global Assessment of Soil Degradation map. The atlas will also include case studies of areas covering the borders of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, and, separately, of Syria, Tunisia and the USSR.

At a continental level there will be four maps of Africa dealing with vegetation change, climate vulnerability and population-carrying capacity, with one map giving general areas of current desertification, and outlining present trends. There will also be maps dealing with local situations in China, Mali, Kenya, Argentina, Australia and India.

UNEP will distribute copies of the World Atlas of Desertification *to governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, United Nations libraries and information centres.*

The atlas will also be available commercially from the publisher Edward Arnold & Co., London, United Kingdom.

healthline

Ghana

Midwifery's rising star

by Samuel Sarpong

At 2 a.m., the entire population in the village of Kumawu in the Ashanti region of Ghana is asleep, with the exception of Obaapanyin Adwoa Nsiah who always sleeps with one eye open.

As the village's midwife, Adwoa Nsiah's sleep is often interrupted with calls from women in labour, usually accompanied by their worried husbands.

But at such unholy hours, 66-year-old Adwoa, who is an accredited traditional birth attendant (TBA), is always ready to attend to her clients at the courtyard of her adobe-walled thatch house strategically placed in the centre of the village.

With an expertise inherited from her mother, she comforts, exhorts and encourages the pregnant woman, guiding her through the hazards of labour and delivery.

During the following weeks, she pays regular visits to the new mother and child and advises on the rich herbal preparations that can make the child healthier and stronger. She also provides professional advice and instructions on modern family planning methods.

Addressing Adwoa, villagers use the title "Obaapanyin", which literally means "Elderly Woman", indicating the growing respect that she and her colleagues, other TBAs scattered all over the country, command in Ghanaian society.

Today, TBAs are appreciated as never before. They were once thought of as poor relatives in the family of health workers, but they are now winning favour with health administrations in developing countries including Ghana. Their status has also been bolstered by the World Health Organization, which is advocating their use as one way of meeting basic health needs. This is with good reason, in that TBAs deliver 60 to 80 per cent of all babies in the Third World. "They are being considered as irreplaceable in the decades ahead", says Nana Akuoko Sarpong, secretary for health.

The acceptance is reflected in a doubling over the past years in the number of countries formally recognizing the skills of TBAs through registration, certification and licensing programmes. It is also seen in the increase of training programmes run by health administrators for midwives.

In line with this realization, Ghana has embarked on a massive programme to enhance the prestige and competence of TBAs, who form the first line of contact in the child delivery system.

As a first step, a national training programme for TBAs was set up to improve service performance and reduce the incidence of neonatal tetanus often associated with unsterilized instruments like blades and sharp edges of broken bottles which TBAs like Adwoa routinely use to cut the umbilical cord of the newborn baby. The guidelines for the programme were prepared jointly with Columbia University in the United States.

UNICEF/Bert Dammers

In eastern Rwanda, TBAs use leaves and roots to make age-old remedies that work in tandem with modern medicine.

The training programme is being mounted in five regions of the country by the United States Agency for International Development, with technical assistance from the American College of Nurse Midwives.

Implementation is being assisted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund.

To encourage participation, TBAs are offered a UNICEF midwifery kit, which is highly prized. The kit includes primary health care items, condoms and foaming tablets for birth control (see story below).

As a further step to give recognition to the import of the services of these traditional health practitioners, a survey will be conducted to prepare a database on the contribution of TBAs in the reduction of maternal deaths and the child mortality rate at birth.

Such analysis of the performance of TBAs would give an up-to-date and scientifically defined role to TBAs so as to emphasize the best elements in both traditional and orthodox health delivery.

According to health secretary Akuoko, "this measure is in tune with the ministry's desire to incorporate health service providers who have hitherto been kept out of focus in the overall health service delivery".

Findings from a recent study conducted during the training programme showed that TBAs had retained much of what they had been taught about delivery and had begun routine and thorough antenatal care which few had provided before training.

Relations between TBAs and health post staff had also improved dramatically. The traditional midwives had come to understand the importance of referrals and were no longer hesitant to refer difficult cases to the health posts.

The post-intervention survey also showed that TBAs did a much better job in family planning counselling and primary health care education and that those who had used their services after their training were the best informed in these subjects.

"However, we need adequate and appropriate support from the health posts and the ministry of health at the district, regional and national levels", says 55-year-old Owusu Mensah, a male TBA who just participated in the programme.

"Even though we have long been recognized for our availability, steadfastness and cultural appropriateness in caring for mothers and newborns in every corner of the country, little had been done to upgrade our skills", notes 42-year-old Esi Amankwah, another participant. "Now we are a respected part of the health care system. Everyone benefits." □

Samuel Sarpong is a journalist specializing in development and environmental issues.

Appropriate technology

Delivery kits for safer home births

Delivery kits, which can be produced locally at low cost, are being designed to provide the minimum of equipment necessary to facilitate a clean home delivery. They provide basic materials that can help prevent infections, particularly neonatal tetanus, in either the mother or the baby during the delivery.

The equipment allows the traditional birth attendant to meet the priorities of the "three cleans". This concept was developed by the Chinese in a successful project which helped barefoot doctors to reduce infections associated with childbirth. It refers to the clean hands of the birth attendant, the clean cutting of the cord and cord care, and the clean surface on which the mother can give birth.

To meet these needs the kits contain at least the following items: soap and nail sticks for clean hands; razor blade, cord ties and cotton balls for clean cord care; and a plastic sheet (1 m x 1 m), towel or sheet for a clean delivery surface.

The contents of the kit may vary from country to country and even between different districts. They can be put together in a local factory or workshop, or by the traditional birth attendant and kept by either the attendant or the mother herself.

An outline of how district or project primary health care managers could begin to organize the production and use of these kits is outlined in *Guidelines for introducing simple delivery kits at the community level**. This small, green book developed by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Programme of Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning gives clear instructions on country experiences using simple delivery kits. It describes the value of the kits, makes suggestions for programme management and for organizing the production of the kits.

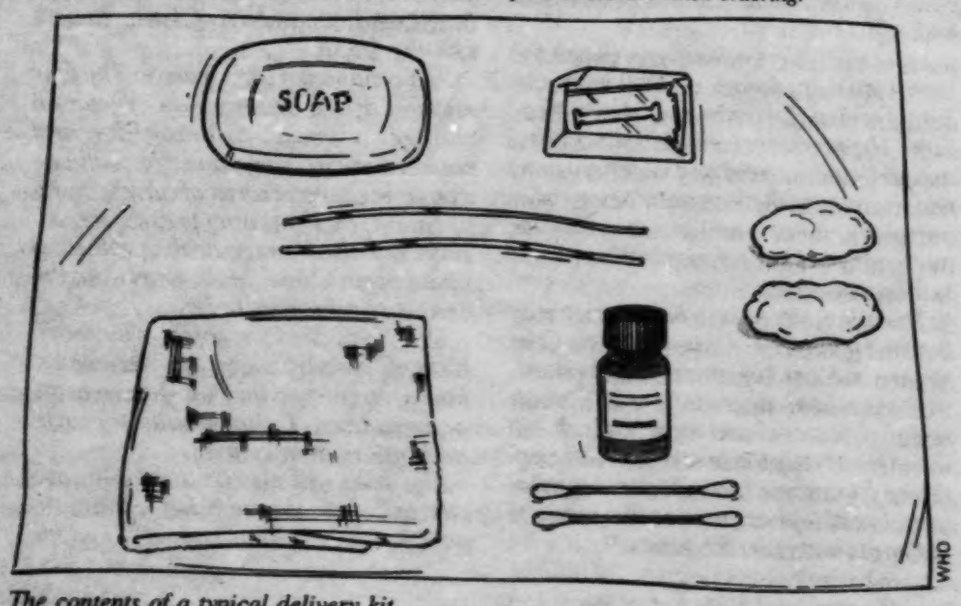
In Bangladesh, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and a United States NGO called Program for Appropriate Technology in Health have worked with local groups to develop low-cost delivery kits. Local assembly of the kit, including manufacture of some of the contents and the container, keeps the price low and creates employment for community organizations.

Experience has shown that no single kit will meet everyone's needs, and that careful consideration should be given to the contents. Any kit developed will probably need revision as it is intended for wider circulation and other users and needs must be identified.

Compromises must also be made as to what is possible for a given cost, what is recommended by health officials, and what is seen as desirable by the buying public. As well, constant evaluation of the product will help make a kit, or kits, more appropriate for the needs and resources of the target users.

WHO, currently evaluating its guidelines in two projects in different parts of India, is interested in encouraging youth leaders to use the guidelines. The idea is that young people could help put together delivery kits and, with the help of the guidelines, learn more about safe motherhood and childbirth. □

* Guidelines for introducing simple delivery kits at the community level *(in English, French and Arabic) is available, free of charge, from World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland. Please quote MCH/87.4 when ordering.*



WHO

The contents of a typical delivery kit.

Population Perspectives

Peru

National debate on family planning

by Zoraida Portillo

Fran Antmann

A miner's family in Peru's highlands mourns one of its children.

Lima—Although 80 per cent of Peruvian women of reproductive age want to plan the number of children they will have, only 45 per cent use some form of contraceptive, according to the National Institute of Statistics and non-governmental population organizations.

This contradiction between the intention to use birth control and reality could be reduced if a plan announced by president Alberto Fujimori on family planning is carried out.

But as is expected from all societies who are strongly influenced by the Catholic church, the programme has caused serious controversies.

The project contemplates free access to information on birth control methods and the distribution of contraceptives in all public health establishments.

Two organizations will be of utmost importance in this programme—the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)—said health minister Carlos Vidal Layseca.

In reality, UNFPA has been closely collaborating with the government of Peru since the past administration of president Alan García with two projects of maternal health and family planning.

The director of UNFPA for Peru and Paraguay, Einar Sandey, said that the important thing in president Fujimori's announcement is the will to support the family planning programme from the highest level.

Fujimori declared that the goal of the programme is to reach the year 2000 with fewer than 300,000 births per year. Currently there are around 650,000 births every year—the highest rate in South America following Bolivia and Ecuador.

He said that if the country's present growth rate continues, by the end of the century Peru will have 30 million inhabitants, of whom over 23 million will live in cities and the rest in rural areas.

"The state has an enormous responsibility regarding uncontrolled population growth and the crisis which the country lives through", Fujimori declared. "We often express admiration for the developed world and we don't stop to analyze the ingredients that have made this development possible."

For many conservative sectors, the presidential reference to birth control means that state-directed methods and indiscriminate distribution of contraceptives "in streets and squares" will be promoted, as was expressed by Cardinal Juan Landazuri.

Carlos Aramburu, president of the National Population Council, denied establishment of "state-run planning", but added that the programme must modify criteria allowing the entire population to have free access to information on birth control.

The church seems to agree with this point but only as long as no propaganda is used or people are not led to use artificial methods.

One of the main problems faced by government family planning programmes is the rejection by the male population of allowing "their" women to use contraceptive methods.

Juan Pecho, a mining leader, says that the family planning programme he promoted at work failed because men complained that their women became "grouchy" or that it would enable them "to sleep with other men because they won't get pregnant".

According to a study by the Center for Peruvian Women "Floratristan", however, one of the reasons for not using birth control is high cost. Currently the cheapest intrauterine device costs 7.5 million intis ($17.00) and the pill costs around 1.5 million intis ($3.40). IPS □

Bangladesh

Social marketing: More marketing than social?

by Rashmi Luthra

Social marketing—a strategy that applies techniques of commercial marketing for social goals—has been celebrated as being responsive to the desires and needs of people. The strategy is gaining wide popularity among development communication specialists, especially for health and child survival promotion. But the experience of the family planning social marketing project in Bangladesh raises questions about how responsive the methods are to those who fall largely outside the reach of market mechanisms—in this case, poor rural women. This social marketing effort is a case study in how emphasis on technique over common sense can jeopardize the entire programme.

The ongoing project, which began in 1973, aimed to increase massively the use of contraceptives in Bangladesh, especially among low-income families in rural areas. Currently, the project sells approximately 115 million condoms, six million oral contraceptive cycles, and three million foaming tablets each year at below-market prices through mass retail outlets.

To promote sales of the product, Bangladeshi market research firms and advertising agencies were hired. Through market surveys, researchers concluded that Bangladeshi men do the shopping and are the major decision-makers on family planning, and therefore they should be the primary target audience for promotional messages.

The campaign gave major emphasis to the formal mass media—television, radio and the press—because they were considered the most cost-efficient way to reach the largest audience and because advertising firms' expertise lay in mass media.

In Bangladesh, however, these channels are primarily accessible to men, especially urban men, and least accessible to rural women. Initially, the project made only minimal use of informal media and interpersonal communication, which had proven more effective in reaching women.

As a result of this approach, information on who should use the contraceptives, how they should be used, and potential side-effects was not adequately available to the end users of the pills and foaming tablets—the women.

This became a problem when pill-users began to suffer unpleasant side-effects. The only information about side-effects was included in printed package inserts (even though most rural women were illiterate) and, in fact, the printed inserts played down side-effects by reassuring women that they would disappear after a few monthly cycles. As early as 1977, project staff became aware that women were complaining of side-effects from the pills. But it was not until sales began to fall off in 1979 that they took women's concerns seriously enough to redirect the marketing strategy.

Subsequently, a household distribution scheme was adopted in which saleswomen made one-time visits to women in their homes. Although they were effective in boosting sales to rural women, this approach was quite costly and therefore was discontinued.

Yet from this scheme, and a similar effort in 1987, it became apparent that repeat visits with women were needed to address their concerns about side-effects. But project staff felt that intensive repeat direct communication "wasn't compatible" with the mass-marketing strategy.

Also in response to the problem of side-effects, project planners decided to "differentiate" the new pill by making it more expensive and marketing it to an urban literate audience. It was felt that more educated women would better understand *the explanations of possible breakthrough* bleeding with use of the low-dose pill. Yet since there was evidence suggesting that the side-effects from the high-dose pill were most severe in malnourished women, this strategy deprived precisely those women who needed the low-dose pill most.

In sum, nearly every decision made during the project—the reliance on market research and advertising agencies, the use of mass media, distribution through mass retail outlets, the two-tiered product differentiation and even the manner of direct communication with women—was driven mainly by marketing and sales signals as defined by Western commercial marketing practice, rather than by users' health needs and concerns. On the whole, these decisions favoured men and disadvantaged women, especially poor rural women. This experience illustrates some problems that can occur as a result of the tensions between the "marketing" and the "social" dimensions of a social marketing campaign. □

'Nearly every decision made during the project was driven by marketing and sales signals, rather than by users' health needs and concerns.'

Rashmi Luthra, from India, is a research fellow at the University of Wisconsin. This article is based on her research.

ngo forum

trade

GATT as vehicle for development

Non-governmental development and environment organizations from 27 countries, meeting in Brussels in early December, called for the final GATT Uruguay Round to place a new emphasis on the development dimension of trade and a return to GATT's integration within the United Nations system. Although the final GATT negotiations were stalemated shortly after the NGO meeting *(see story on page 1)*, the watchdog groups are expecting new efforts to hammer out an agreement in Geneva some time in February and hope to maintain a strong presence around the final talks.

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Many GATT agreements supported by industrialized countries, the NGOs warned, threaten to stifle people-oriented development and to hand over world trade to the interests of transnational companies. The Uruguay Round, in their view, is aimed at reorganizing the world economy within a new multilateral framework which favours absolute power and position for the transnationals.

The talks were also criticized as having failed to address the effects of the present trading system on hunger, poverty, external debt and underdevelopment.

NGOs, in daily touch with vulnerable producers and consumers in the South and the North, called on GATT not to violate the rights of people to work for sustainable development and self-determination. In particular, GATT must enable developing countries to protect their fragile production systems and to promote their food production and infant industries by regulating the activities of foreign companies. All countries must resist the pressure to put their names to a "single protocol" which would override their democratic responsibilities to protect their weaker citizens.

They also argued that GATT must aim for a fair trade agreement that takes into account the requirements of sustainable development and limits itself to removing the trade distortions caused by governments and private business.

The main concerns of the 53 NGO participants at the Brussels meeting were endorsed in a declaration and delivered to all delegations negotiating the Uruguay Round. They included:

- In order to guarantee food security, developing countries must be permitted to control cheap food imports.
- GATT must eliminate overproduction and export dumping of farm products from the North.
- The needs of food-importing developing countries could be met by creating conditions in support of smallholders' productive capacity and prices which cover production costs.
- There is a realistic fear that standards of ecological sustainability and of health and plant health regulations prescribed by international treaties and organizations will not be reinforced by GATT, but that on the contrary GATT will restrict the rights of countries to introduce enhanced standards.
- In order to develop the service and manufacturing sectors in accordance with their development objectives, the NGO declaration demands that developing countries keep the right to regulate investment and the behaviour of transnational companies.
- It also calls for intellectual property rights to remain the responsibility of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and not to cover life forms which would result in reduction of genetic diversity and threaten food security and public health in developing countries.
- Concerning textiles, the Multi-Fibre-Arrangement should be phased out in no more than seven years, without conditions being placed on developing countries.
- The functioning of the GATT system gives undue weight to the richer countries and companies, and must therefore be made more democratic, accountable and transparent. The NGOs propose the introduction of advisory councils drawn from civil associations so that people's interests are guaranteed.
- A multilateral or international trade organization can only be established after full debate at the national level and within the United Nations framework and with guarantees that it fully integrates existing declarations, conventions and agencies of the United Nations, and in particular UNCTAD.

For further information contact Myriam Vander Stichele, Coordinator, NGO GATT Steering Committee, Avenue de Cortenbergh, 62, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium. Tel. (322) 736-4087; Fax (322) 732-1934.

awards

Right Livelihood Awards

The 1990 Right Livelihood Awards focused on peace, human rights, grassroots development and corporate responsibility.

The honorary award went to United States economist Alice Tepper Marlin, founder and president of the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities "for the courage and vision to show the directions in which the Western economy must develop if it is to contribute to—instead of harming—global security and the well-being of humanity".

Three recipients shared the cash award of $120,000:

- Bernard Lédéa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), peasant leader and organizer, "both for setting up the immensely successful NAAM Movement in his country and for establishing the Six S Association in order to strengthen peasant self-help movements all over West Africa".
- Felicia Langer (Israel), human rights lawyer, who for over 20 years has defended Palestinians from gross injustice in the Israeli military courts.
- Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos del Carare (ATCC), a Colombian agricultural workers' organization, for "outstanding courage and commitment to peace, family and community, even when surrounded and threatened by the most senseless violence".

The Awards were presented at the Swedish Parliament on 9 December, the day before the Nobel Prize presentations. The Awards, often referred to as the "Alternative Nobel Prizes", were introduced in 1980 "to honour and support practicable and replicable solutions to the problems facing us today". The idea came from Jakob von Uexkull, a Swedish-German writer and philatelic expert.

Right Livelihood Award, P.O. Box 15072, S-10465 Stockholm, Sweden.

indigenous peoples

Preserving cultures

The Arctic to Amazonia Alliance is a non-profit educational organization whose purpose is to facilitate better communication and understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples regarding the preservation of indigenous cultures and the natural systems on which they depend for their existence.

The Alliance believes it can play an important role in building increased public understanding of and support for preserving the ecological systems which keep the planet healthy.

Towards this end, the Alliance is creating a worldwide list of publications and writers interested in informing the general public about the preservation of both biological and cultural diversity. The Alliance welcomes receiving newsletters or journals on tropical forest preservation and/or indigenous peoples' rights.

For more information, write to: Peter Gibbs, Communications Assistant, Arctic to Amazonia Alliance, P.O. Box 73, Strafford, Vermont 05072, USA. Tel. (802) 765-4337.

north/ south

Readjusting relations

Increasingly, NGOs of the South have sought a different relationship with their "lenders"; the NGOs of the North often spoke of changing it. All that remained was to find an appropriate forum for discussing the means of achieving it.

"Agen 89" was the first step. Chaired by the Fondation de France, a private state-approved non-profit organization set up in 1969 on the initiative of Charles de Gaulle and André Malraux, the forum provided an abundance of ideas and questions, and led to the setting up of a working group on each continent where all points of view on non-governmental cooperation were to be represented.

Continent by continent, the working groups are listening to such questions as:

— "Why has private aid been falling?"
— "How can the people of the North be informed about the situation in the South?"
— "How can local resources be mobilized and promoted?"
— "What approach should be followed to cease being branches of the North?"
— "How can [NGOs] meet new challenges such as environmental protection and respecting cultural identities?"

The next step on the "road to change" will be the Cotonou meetings organized by the Fondation de France from 8-11 January. One hundred and twenty people, mostly from the South, will come together in Cotonou, Benin, to discuss partnership and dependence; expatriates and voluntary workers; the changing role of finance; introduction of a real information policy; and follow-up.

The Fondation de France, in organizing the meetings, feels that "it is now time to go one step further, determine who must do what, and in what context".

For more information, write to Fondation de France, 40 avenue Hoche, 75008 Paris, France. Tel. (1) 42-25-66-66. Fax (1) 45-63159.

agriculture

UK/Third World farmer link-up

A new organization, Farmers Third World Network (FTWN), is working to increase awareness of British farmers of the interdependence between themselves and farmers in Third

World countries. FTWN organizers aim to promote awareness among the farming community of the problems facing farmers in developing countries as well as to foster links with like-minded farmers and farming groups throughout Europe.

"As farmers, I think we can respond from the heart", says FTWN organizer Nick Viney, a farmer from Dorset, UK. "While we never suffer the sort of total crop losses that affect Third World farmers, we know something of what it is like to lose a crop or turn cattle out onto almost bare fields. In this respect we have more to give than just money. Our voluntary and practical work can be particularly appropriate, and our policy work can be based on our down-to-earth understanding."

FTWN maintains that changes in GATT arrangements affect European farmers as much as they affect the poorest Third World farmers. "The people taking important decisions for both our futures often do not understand the full implications of the policy changes they make", explains Viney. "It is in British farmers' own interests to find out about these issues, because they cannot do anything to influence the policies currently shaping world agriculture unless they know enough about them."

Together with the Norwich, UK-based body, Farmers Link-Nead, FTWN is publishing a new magazine *Food Matters* to widen the debate on the future of farming and food production.

For more information contact FTWN, Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ, UK.

environment

NGO comments sought

The World Bank's new environmental assessment policy calls for governments to take the views of affected groups and local NGOs fully into account in project design and implementation. The Bank is seeking NGO comments on a provisional version of advice to its staff on how this policy should be carried out.

At the same time the Bank wants to inform NGOs about a proposed Global Environmental Facility which the UNDP, UNEP and the Bank will administer.

For the package of documents, write to David Beckmann, International Relations Division, The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20433, USA.

calendar

World Consumer Rights Day, 15 March 1991.

World Consumer Rights Day is an annual occasion for consumer organizations and other groups to draw attention to specific issues and problems having a direct bearing on consumers' rights.

The theme for 1991 is "the Right to Consumer Protection", as recognized, defined and promoted by the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

To assist consumer organizations in planning special World Consumer Rights Day activities, the Regional Office of the International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU) in The Hague has produced an "action kit". It contains a series of articles and a poster explaining the theme for 1991 and suggesting specific areas and activities for involvement by groups.

Organizations planning a special campaign or other events are asked to inform IOCU's Regional Office in The Hague of their activities once they have taken place.

IOCU, Emmastraat 9, 2595 EG The Hague, Netherlands.

IOCU World Congress, 8-12 July 1991, Hong Kong.

The International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU) will hold its Thirteenth World Congress in Hong Kong from 8 to 12 July 1991. The theme is "Consumer Power in the Nineties".

Since the last Congress, IOCU has strengthened the consumer movement in the new frontiers—Africa and Eastern Europe. At this Congress IOCU will examine the specific orientations of the consumer movement given the unprecedented and tumultuous changes in the world towards the end of the 1980s. The different manifestations of the power of consumers organizing for change will be examined in four seminars: consumer power in a changing world; consumer power in a "free" market; consumers in poverty: generating power; and consumer power and the environment—the emergence of green consumerism.

Workshops will examine issues such as consumer protection in China, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Pacific, eco-labelling, testing for green products, consequences of the Uruguay Round of GATT, privatization, understanding external debt, etc.

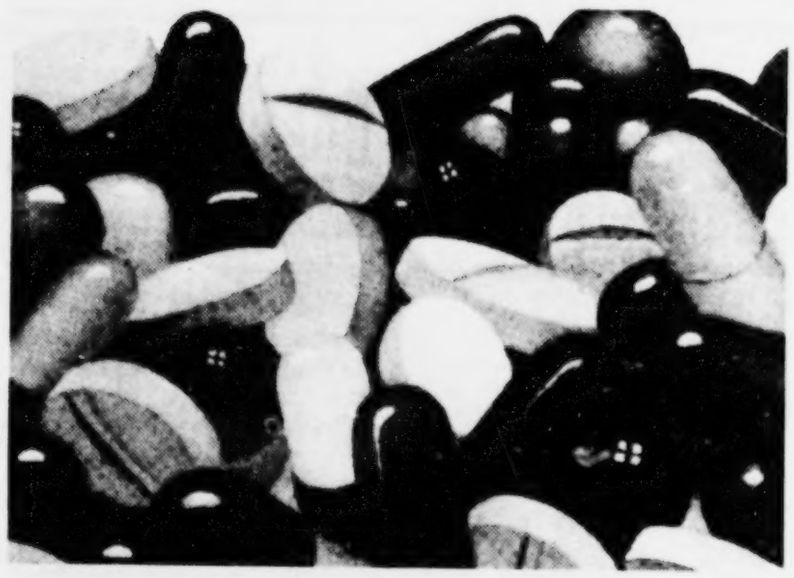
Participation at the Congress will be limited to 550.

For registration forms and other information, please contact Ms. Rajeswari Kanniah, Congress Coordinator, 13th IOCU World Congress Secretariat, 250-A Jalan Air Itam, 10460 Penang, Malaysia. Tel/Fax (60-4) 376955; Telex 40164; Cable INTEROCU Penang.

Soapbox

In this column, NGO representatives freely sound off on major and contentious issues of the development-environment debate.

For a more rational drug use



No one will ever argue for the irrational use of drugs. If drugs are to be used rationally, all drugs available in the market should be safe, effective and cost-efficient. In reality, however, rational drug use is the exception rather than the rule in both developed and developing countries, where markets are flooded with thousands of ineffective and potentially harmful drugs.

Major factors determining the availability and use of drugs in a country are the prescription practices of doctors, the structure and operations of the drug industry, the effectiveness of the drug regulatory authority and political will.

Doctors insist on having the freedom to select whatever drug is best for their patients. But there is evidence that many doctors are heavily influenced by commercial sources of drug information. While public health has been recognized as a social responsibility, the provision of medicines remains almost exclusively in the domain of private industry. A conflict of interest exists between the social objectives of providing health care services to all, and the drug industry's orientation towards increasing sales, market shares and profits.

An "ideal" drug industry will be one where commercial considerations and social priorities converge. For Third World countries, this can be achieved by the following strategy:

- Give the public sector a leading role in pharmaceutical production;
- Encourage national drug entrepreneurs to set up or expand their activities;
- Allow foreign investment in drug manufacturing under government control;
- Provide tax and fiscal benefits for indigenous research and development;
- Allow imports of technology after careful scrutiny and reference to national research and development institutions;
- Organize pooled imports of selected drugs and chemicals to avoid transfer pricing.

Drug regulatory agencies in a number of developed countries have close contacts with companies developing new drugs. Safety has been the prime factor determining the granting of licenses for such drugs. In many developing countries, on the other hand, drug regulatory authorities are weak and unable to play an important role in encouraging the rational use of drugs.

All member states of the World Health Organization have accepted the concepts of essential drugs and rational drug use. Yet a large number of these countries have not introduced drug policies based on these concepts. Perhaps the most important element necessary for accepting these policies—political will—is absent.

The governments of Chile, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Bangladesh are among those that have taken measures to implement rational drug policies. Bangladesh recently introduced further measures to implement its national drug policy based on rational drug use, but the country continues to face pressure from the drug industry and private doctors in implementing this policy.

Around the world, consumers' groups, health care workers and governments are asking hard questions as to how drug policies are made. What have the medical and pharmaceutical professions done to promote the concepts of essential drugs and their rational use to their members and the general public? Have the schools of medicine and pharmacy introduced these concepts into courses? How have the media responded to the challenge? Have the manufacturers accepted the national drug policies and made changes to their production programmes?

These questions can be asked of all those involved in the provision of health care to people everywhere.

Rash Behari is associate editor of the *IOCU Newsletter* and publications officer at the Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Penang, Malaysia.

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catalogues

The **Novib Catalogue**, from the Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation, offers more than 500 products from the Third World—jewelry, leather goods, toys and games, food and beverages, kitchenware, bed and bath accessories, furniture, books and stationery—some of them made with century-old techniques. The catalogue is made in cooperation with S.O.S. World Trade. S.O.S. imports the products and Novib sells them. This way, middlemen are eliminated and producers obtain a fairer price.

Novib, Amalialaan 7, 2514 JC, The Hague, Netherlands.

Essential Publications for Technical Co-operation lists reports, monographs, papers, reference works, manuals, bibliographies and training packages, to name a few, written by experts with wide experience in the subjects in which the International Labour Organisation has had full competence for over half a century. The subjects range from cooperative development, management development, technology and training to vocational rehabilitation, workers' education and rural development.

Publications may be obtained through major booksellers or from International Labour Office, Washington Branch, 1750 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, USA.

Lynne Rienner Publishers: A Complete Catalog. Subjects listed include Africa, Asia, agriculture/agricultural economics, Caribbean, ethnicity, food policy, international studies, political economy, strategic studies and women's studies.

Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1800 30th St., Suite 314, Boulder, Colorado 80301-1032, USA.

Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America, Inc., 1990 Catalog. A complete listing of over 225 titles on: appropriate technology for First and Third Worlds; community economic change in North America; grassroots and sustainable development in the Third World; environment and social change; the new economics; personal self-reliance, and women in development.

Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America, Inc./The Bootstrap Press, Suite 9A, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

directory

The Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has published a new edition of the **Directory of Non-Governmental Development Organisations in OECD Member Countries**. It provides concise information on the structure, aims, development education work and activities of 2,542 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the 24 OECD member countries.

The Directory aims to facilitate contacts and improve cooperation among NGOs themselves and to assist planners and decision-makers in the development field in identifying appropriate sources of aid. As such, it is an indispensable working tool for NGOs, development planners and practitioners worldwide.

Comprehensive indexes facilitate the user's search for information on "who is doing what and where" in the development field.

The Directory may be ordered from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. F430; £50; $90; DM168.

grants

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has published its **Development Education Program: Project Guidelines and Grant Applications, Fiscal Year 1991.**

The purpose of the grants programme is to "help facilitate widespread public discussion, analysis and review of the issues raised by the report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger of March 1980, especially the issues...calling for increased public awareness of the political, economic, technical and social factors relating to hunger and poverty".

Since the programme began in 1981, USAID has awarded approximately 80 project grants to a variety of organizations. Grants are to be used to help educate the public on United States development activities overseas as they relate to poverty and hunger. In 1990 it was expanded to include universities which have experience in development and public education programmes.

Project activities have included the design and delivery of training programmes for teachers, trainers, church leaders and other groups; preparation and dissemination of resource materials for use in formal and non-formal educational settings; and workshops and roundtable discussions designed to relate development issues to groups such as women, corporate leaders, conservationists, journalists, business groups, farmers, youth groups, cooperative members, minorities and others.

The deadline for receipt of project applications is 1 February 1991.

For the application form and more information, write to Development Education Program, Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (FVA/PVC), Room 5314-A NS, USAID, Washington, D.C. 20523-0069, USA.

woodstoves

The Foundation for Woodstove Dissemination has published a booklet containing information about foundation activities and a plan of action for 1990-1991. The main objectives of the foundation are to facilitate the exchange of information on cookstoves, improve the quality of information generated, and formulate and initiate regional programmes.

For information, contact Stephen Karekezi, Foundation for Woodstove Dissemination, P.O. Box 30979, Nairobi, Kenya.

population

World Population: Fundamentals of Growth, *Population Reference Bureau, Circulation Dept., P.O. Box 96152, Washington, D.C. 20090-6152, USA.*

Compiled by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a non-profit educational organization, this new chartbook is designed to help students of all ages understand the components of population growth and change. It presents a history of world population growth, current population trends and future projections.

The 32-page chartbook includes full-page maps and charts that track: historical world population growth; changes in natural increase; migration; population composition by age and sex; population momentum; urbanization; and world health.

Each map or chart is accompanied by a written summary and analysis of the topic. Additional graphs and tables are included in most sections. The booklet also contains PRB's popular *1990 World Population Data Sheet* in an 8 1/2" x 11" format, a glossary of terms and a list of the world's largest urban areas. The study section guides students through the analysis of the charts, review of the text, activities for using the *Data Sheet* and discussion questions.

World Population: Fundamentals of Growth, together with a teacher's guide, is available for $5.00. Bulk orders of two or more at $4.00 each. A set of 12 slides is available for $10.00. Add $1.00 or 3 per cent (whichever is greater) to each order for shipping/handling.

training

The first **International Training Programme for Development Practitioners (ITP)** was completed last August. The six-month programme for professionals working in non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) was organized by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The programme provides both a contextual framework for the task of institutional development in NGDOs and trains the participants in essential facilitation skills as future leaders of their organization.

Even though applications for the 1991 programme are closed, the Institute is receiving inquiries about participation in the 1992 programme. Through the Institute, participants can apply for a partial scholarship.

For further information, contact Institute of Cultural Affairs, International Training Programme, rue Amédée Lynen 8, 1030 Brussels, Belgium.

aquaculture

Raising Fish in Ponds: A Farmer's Guide to Tilapia Culture, by Dennis and Meredith Murnyak, *Heifer Project International, P.O. Box 808, 1015 South Louisiana, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203, USA. $5.25 postpaid.*

This manual was prepared for farmers to help them learn how to build ponds and raise fish as a way of producing nutritious food and building healthy communities. Clearly written and well illustrated, it guides the farmer from selecting the fish and pond site, building the pond, fish stocking and growth monitoring, to harvesting and preserving the fish. There are chapters on record-keeping, problems of theft, predation, fish kills and health hazards, and on expanding the operation. The manual can also be used by development workers and extension agents as a training tool.

coastal resources

A Guide to Public Education Programs provides a convenient list of the best materials on coastal resources, where to obtain them and which ones are available free. It explains how to get started in developing a programme for increasing public understanding of the importance and complexity of our coasts, with quick reference tables comparing the different kinds of resource materials.

Kumarian Press, Inc., 630 Oakwood Ave., Suite 119, West Hartford, CT 06110-1529, USA. $9.95.

education

Teaching about Africa Recovery, United Nations Department of Public Information.

This teacher's manual brings together the wealth of information that exists in the United Nations on African recovery and development in a form that can be applied easily in the classroom.

The manual can be used separately or with an educational video entitled About the United Nations: Africa Recovery. The first classroom example is written as a teaching guide for the video, while other examples explore various aspects of the African crisis and what is being done about them.

The topic of African recovery and development is relevant to studies on history, civics, economics, geography, science, current affairs and social studies.

Teaching about Literacy, United Nations Department of Public Information.

Attempts to bring together the wealth of information that exists in the United Nations and UNESCO on literacy. It can be used separately or with the educational video About the United Nations: Literacy. Literacy is a suitable topic for discussion in civics, social studies, history and geography classes.

To order United Nations publications and films, contact your nearest Information Centre or Service. You may also write to Public Inquiries, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA.

partnership

Partners in Action: A Guide to International Action Projects, by Patricia Sinnott Harrell and Ellen Hayes Wright, *International Service Association for Health, Inc., P.O. Box 15086, Atlanta, Georgia 30333, USA.*

The purpose of this guide is to show how individuals or organizations can participate in already existing international action projects or how they can initiate new ones. Participation in such projects leads to better understanding of people in the developing world and helps people form relationships that benefit partners on both sides.

International action projects are an integral part of development education because they give people a chance actually to take part in a project that has a positive impact. Opportunities for travelling, hosting international visitors and learning about another part of the world make people more attuned to international events and the interconnectedness of the world.

The guide is intended primarily for people in leadership positions of civic or service groups, but can also be used by others involved in international development issues.

health

List of Free Materials in Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health, compiled by Penelope Maglaque and Catherine Murphy, *Program for International Training in Health (INTRAH), The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Medicine, 208 N. Columbia St., CB# 8100, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, USA.*

This training packet is supplied to organizations in developing countries and to international agencies for the purpose of sharing useful ideas, outstanding training or reference materials and relevant information on a variety of subjects with trainers, training programme managers and field workers in family planning/maternal and child health. The materials in the packet are either available free of charge to all requestors or free only to persons working in developing countries.

engineering

Guide for Engineers on Information and Environmental Field.

Concerns all engineers and actors in industrial development facing environmental problems. It provides a list of 200 international and national information services and suppliers in 54 countries. Of help not only to engineers but also to specialists in charge of supplying environmental information, it proposes a simple and precise method to analyze particular situations. The guide was published with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Development Research Centre.

Please send order form and cheque for $100.00 to Jean Michel, Chairman, WFEO/CEI ENPC, 28, rue des Saints-Pères, 75007 Paris, France.

calendar

World Congress on Philanthropy, 9-12 June 1991, Miami, Florida, USA.

The Congress convenes every three years to serve as a forum for the advancement of the practice of philanthropic activity. Foundation and corporate executives, private philanthropists, administrators of voluntary organizations, and representatives of government agencies meet to exchange information, generate ideas, and encourage activity that will mean a better life for more people—wherever they live.

Keynote speakers will be Liv Ullmann, actress, goodwill ambassador for UNICEF and vice president of the International Rescue Committee; and Sir Paul Reeves, newly appointed representative of the Anglican Communion to the United Nations and former governor general of New Zealand.

For more information, write to The World Congress on Philanthropy Educational Foundation, 1145 19th St., NW, Suite 201, Washington, D.C. 20036, USA. Tel (703) 683-0000. Fax (703) 683-3834.

human settlements

The Poor Die Young: Housing and Health in Third World Cities, Sandy Cairncross, Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite, Eds., *Earthscan Publications Limited, 3 Endsleigh St., London WC1H 0DD, UK. 1990, 336 pp,* £9.95.

The title tells the story. The cities of the Third World now house 1.3 billion people, more than the populations of Europe and North America combined. And most of the poor in those cities die young. Half of all deaths are of children under five, and in most of Asia, Africa and Latin America, only one in four lives to the age of 65. Those who do survive face continual ill-health.

The problems are huge but, in many cases, cheap and effective solutions are available. This book assesses the scale of what needs to be done and how it can be achieved. More often than not, the difficulty lies with the refusal of governments to introduce low-cost innovations in water, sanitation, health care and other services, or to work with the local community organizations in addressing the problems. As the book shows, the best hope for reversing the deepening crisis in Third World cities lies in a new partnership of professionals, local government and local organizations to enable communities to build healthier neighbourhoods for themselves.

courses

Third International Short Course on Vertebrate Pest Problems and Solutions in Developing Countries, 4-22 August 1991, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA.

The short course is open to individuals working or planning to work with vertebrate pest control projects. Students of agriculture, forestry, wildlife biology and related subjects are also invited. International students studying in the US should contact their sponsoring agencies as soon as possible if they plan to attend the short course. The course can be taken for three graduate level academic credits.

After the short course, there will be an opportunity for participants to visit the Denver Wildlife Research Center and/or its field stations or other vertebrate pest management programmes in the United States.

Participation in the course is limited to 40.

For more details, contact Dr. Julius G. Nagy, Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, USA. Tel (303) 491-5901; Fax (303) 491-5091.

media

Mediawatch, published by the Philippine-based Devmedia Resources Foundation, is a monthly magazine popularizing critical/educational reviews of media products and productions. The subjects covered include locally made movies and locally distributed foreign films, local and foreign TV shows, radio programmes, musical compositions or productions, magazines, comic books, broadcasting and journalism, theatre productions, news and opinion columns. It also carries authoritative guides and ratings of films, video, TV and radio productions.

The Foundation hopes to contribute to the development of appropriate teacher-training programmes and courses on media education through networking with schools, foundations and others involved in media education.

Devmedia Resources Foundation, 1317 Lopez Jaena, Paco, Manila, Philippines.

film/video

United Nations Film and Video Catalogue, 1990-1991, United Nations Department of Public Informations.

United Nations films bring to their audiences a global point of view on the often controversial issues of our time. The topics are approached in a variety of styles, from humorous animated shorts to informative documentary reports filmed around the world.

The approximately 170 films and videos in active distribution cover almost every aspect of the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies—disarmament, peacekeeping, apartheid, Namibia, development, environment, population, drugs and peaceful uses of outer space. Early films describe the formative years—the years in which the objectives of the organization evolved and its foundations were laid.

The films have been produced in as many languages as possible. In addition to the official languages of the United Nations—Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish—many non-official languages are adopted regionally.

All United Nations films and videos are available for purchase from Film Promotion and Distribution Office, Department of Public Information, Room S-0845, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel (212) 963-6939/6953.

The Video Project 1991 Catalog: Films and Videos for a Safe and Sustainable World, *5332 College Ave., Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618, USA.*

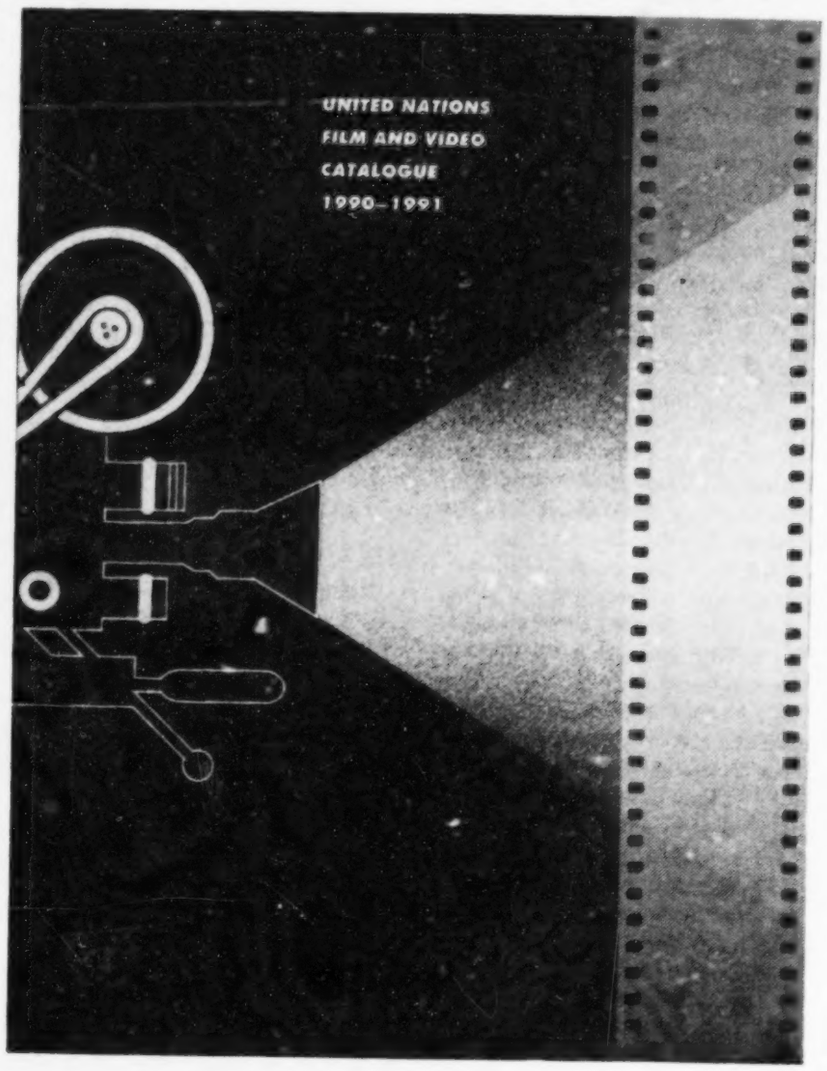
This is the Video Project's largest catalogue to date, with over 130 programmes on critical global issues. Featured are more than 40 releases not listed in the last catalogue.

Most of the new releases are to be found in the environmental category. The tremendous upsurge in public concern about the state of our planet has resulted in many more new productions exploring the environmental crisis—with an emphasis on creative solutions and citizen involvement.

Global changes and challenges following the end of the Cold War have fueled a hot debate over what constitutes national security. Several excellent new programmes help make sense of this debate and pose sensible alternatives to previous policies.

Twenty-two Soviet documentary films from the Glasnost Film Festival are available as a 12-video collection.

The Video Project is a non-profit organization founded in the early 1980s to produce and distribute affordable films and videos on issues critical to our future on the planet. It was originally known as the Educational Film and Video Project.



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The media

Ninja turtles charged with 194 acts of violence

Psychiatrists and citizens' groups around the world are protesting the United States film production, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, calling it "psychologically harmful". According to the International Coalition Against Violent Entertainment (ICAVE), an international coalition of organizations from 23 countries, the film, which has recently set new records for total box-office receipts in the United States, contains 194 acts of violence.

ICAVE charges that the Ninja Turtle film glorifies violence and promotes a culture of violence, noting that the majority of the violent acts in the film were committed by the heroes.

The consumer advocacy group has strongly recommended that parents and children avoid the movie and the related television cartoon series which is aired in many countries. It also recommends that warnings be attached to this film.

The film features four heroic human-sized turtles. The "turtles" kick, punch, flip and knock out dozens of ninja warriors, as they clean up gang violence from the streets of New York City. The police are shown as totally incompetent.

At the end of the film, the heroes' human sidekick kills the captured archvillain in cold blood, crushing him to death in a garbage truck.

ICAVE claims that the glorification of violence and revenge is not suitable material for audiences of any age, and the large numbers of children and teenagers attending this film are a major concern.

The movie's 194 violent acts formed the largest number of acts of violence in any American film last year, according to the group's figures.

The film has been receiving a children's rating from film boards in many countries. ICAVE, protesting the laxity of film boards around the world, maintains that *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and similar films should be restricted to audiences over 18 years of age.

The group claims that film boards are often influenced by film industry lobbying and rarely consider research evidence of the harmful effects of violent entertainment when giving film ratings.

Joseph Strayhorn, a psychiatrist at the University of Pittsburgh and author on child development, states, "It is tragic that, despite the massive evidence showing harmful effects from fantasy violence on normal children, our world culture continues to produce and sell such violence. Advertising campaigns sell these films to children but we never give them the honest truth about their harmfulness. As long as our society continues to glorify and revere violent heroes, lasting progress toward a non-violent world will be blocked."

Thomas Radecki, psychiatrist and research director of ICAVE in the United States, told a press conference, "The evidence is overwhelming that violent role models and fantasy rehearsal of violence make actual violent acts much more likely."

"Of course, there are many films worse than this one. Still, based upon available research information, there is absolutely no doubt that the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is teaching a philosophy of violence to millions of children and teenagers around the world. It is sad that no government has really done anything of lasting significance to correct this situation", he said.

According to Max Hall, chair of the Australian Children's TV Action Committee, his group has been protesting the TV cartoon series in Australia. "The film is still more violent", says Hall. "It's a shocking thing to see what this, *Batman* and similar films are doing to children and teen culture here in our country. We want to warn people as much as possible not to entertain themselves with this film."

Midori Suzuki, director of the Forum for Children's and Citizens' Television in Japan, said, "We are concerned about violence in this and similar films aimed at children and teenagers. They end up on television and video-cassette recorders with huge viewing audiences. This is not good for our Japanese students and culture. We need to be taking stronger action with educational warnings on television and at the movie theatres here in Japan and in every country of our world."

ICAVE notes that over 700 studies from 25 different countries, including numerous long-term field studies, have shown harmful effects from violent television and film entertainment on viewers of all ages.

The American Psychological Association recently testified before the United States congress that "the relationship between televised violence and aggression is real, long-lasting and of practical significance".

The effects include a desensitization to violence, the development of value systems favourable to violence, and an increase in violent and aggressive behaviour. Studies have shown that exposure of pre-teen children to violent entertainment has long-lasting effects which persist into adulthood, causing them to be more likely to engage in serious anti-social activities as adults. □

Third World Network Features

Mass media can make a difference. . .but how much?

Can television, video and film influence behaviour? Since television is a major source of information for billions of people on a daily basis and businesses spend billions on television advertising, clearly many people assume that they do.

But how much? An advertiser considers its TV commercials successful if one out of 100 viewers decides to try its soap or is impressed by the look of its automobile. But researchers differ greatly as to the long term-impact that electronic media has on big changes in lifestyle. Even with impressionable consumers, such as children, there is no conclusive evidence, for example, linking aggressive behaviour to television violence. Still, critics of television maintain that effects of media messages are real whether positive and intentional, such as those of advertising and public service announcements, or negative and unintended, such as those resulting from viewing depictions of violent or criminal behaviour.

As any advertiser or as any social marketer will testify, changing behaviour is far more difficult than one might expect. Even laws threatening penalties often fail to change behaviour. Certainly, people do not change their behaviour simply because a health worker, political leader or even a family member asks them to do so—even if that person appears on television or in film.

Rather, behaviour change is a gradual, step-by-step process dependent on a person's experiences and his or her perception of the personal importance of the change. In this process simpler actions, such as seeking information, usually come first. More difficult or long-term changes, such as practicing safe sex or birth control, must follow these intermediate changes.

by Cathleen A. Church

Thus it is not surprising that many studies of mass media impact on behaviour find very little or no effects or else conflicting results. Major studies have covered both the impact of specific media campaigns seeking to influence areas as diverse as use of family planning and voting behaviour to more subtle, long-term impact such as aggressive behaviour resulting from seeing violent television programmes or changes in perceptions of cultural or demographic groups.

The reasons for this apparent lack of consistent impact are not clear. On one hand, some programmes or campaigns may in fact have no impact, perhaps because they were of poor quality or did not reach enough people to make a measurable difference, or a combination of these. On the other hand, mass media campaigns may have an impact, but it may be obscured for any of several reasons. One possibility is that, in the search for dramatic, large-scale impacts on behaviour change, intermediate and less dramatic effects were overlooked.

Also, research on the impact of mass media faces considerable methodological problems, as a number of studies have pointed out. For example, it is difficult to determine the direction of causality or to prove that observed changes resulted from mass media exposure and not from other influences.

Conventional wisdom contends that mass media can best create awareness and inform, but interpersonal communication is more effective at changing behaviour. This contention dates back to United States research in the 1940s on the effects of radio advertising on voting and has been restated since. A number of studies now suggest, however, that under the right circumstances mass media communication can influence overt behaviour. Some of this evidence comes from studies on the use of television in family planning communication campaigns.

Indeed, mass media communication may be a more cost-effective way to influence behaviour than organized interpersonal communication. Although the impact of mass media on any one individual may be slight, its cumulative effect on an entire population may be great because it reaches many people often.

A re-examination of research findings, looking for intermediate changes, shows that mass media can change behaviour under certain circumstances. Mass media communication is most successful at changing behaviour when it is designed to reach a specific audience and comes from a source—a person or group—that the audience likes, understands and believes. Effectiveness also increases when the message comes through familiar communication media and is engaging, personally relevant and novel. It is also important that the message give viewers the specific information they need to act and that supplies and services are locally available.

Well researched mass media campaigns that are entertaining as well as informative seem to have the greatest impact. □

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